Life of Saint Laurence O'Toole

by Father Albert Legris

Prefatory Statement by the Author

In obedience to the decree of Urban VIII, we declare that we have no intention of attributing any other than a purely human authority to the miraculous deeds and gifts recorded in this book, the discernment of facts of this kind belongs to the supreme authority of the Church.

Chapter 1 - Ireland in the Twelfth Century

Religious and Political Situation - Division of Ireland into Kingdoms and Clans - Principle of Election, its results - Interior Organisation of the Clan - Interminable Contests between the Chieftains - Resultant Evils to the Church and the People - Danish Invasion and its Consequences - The Irish Clergy; their Morals - Restrained Activity - Resigned Attitude - Relaxed Discipline - Relations with the English Bishops; influence of Laurence and of Saint Anselm - Saint Malachi and Gilbert of Limerick preach the Restoration of Discipline and more constant and intimate Relations with Rome - Cardinal Paparo in Ireland

Confined within the limits of their island and having little intercourse of any kind with the outside world, the Irish of the twelfth century resembled but little the other nations of Europe. It might be said that they were separated by a gulf of several centuries from the age in which they lived; in fact they still retained the manners and customs of the ancient Celts.

The country was divided into five provinces or kingdoms, governed by as many kings, one of whom was acknowledged as chief or head, his authority extending over the whole island. But the unity and harmony which this system would seem to imply were more apparent than real. Succession to the royal power, the supreme sovereignty not excepted, was decided by election. This principle of election prevailed universally in Ireland, as well amongst the clans into which the people were divided, as in the system of government prevailing throughout the country.

The consequences resulting from such a procedure are quite intelligible. All that constituted the security and prosperity of the nation, the transmission of authority in the lesser kingdoms, the union of the latter amongst themselves, the undisputed authority of the supreme monarch: none of these things were assured or had any stability. Each successive election excited competition, quickened rivalry, and engendered strife.

"The clan, consisting as it did of those allied by the ties of kindred, even to the ninth degree, their dependents and serfs, represented

social and political unity."

In the clan was centred all life, all activity. Very rarely was there any intercourse between the members of one sept and those of another. Men married the women of their own clan, their own family, often setting the laws of the Church at defiance rather than seek their wives in another tribe.

All property belonged to the chief of the clan and, conjointly with him, to the nobles. The cultivation of the soil was left to men of inferior condition, farmers who were freemen, those who possessed flocks and herds, household goods and chattels; and, finally, husbandmen who were still serfs. But all property was vested in the clan. On the death of the chieftain a re-division of the lands and goods took place amongst the members of the community.

All those motives which induce attachment to the soil and stimulate men's energies were lacking to the members of a clan.

"What interest had the Irish powerful enough to induce them to spend themselves in labour the profit of which would be reaped by the community. Hence, during the whole of the Middle Ages, Ireland was one immense pasture-land, the cities along the coast occupied by the Danes excepted, these being engaged in commerce. But, generally speaking, the inland dwellers, the natives, led sedentary lives, a prey to indolence and idleness. Work of any kind, no matter how little labour it involved, was repugnant to them."

As was said before, the position of head of the clan was elective. The people's choice did not always fall upon the eldest son of the late chieftain. It sometimes happened that another member of the clan was preferred to him, and often the oldest of the freemen was chosen, whence resulted ill-will and strife, which, when occasion offered, flared into fratricidal contests.

If dissensions arose so easily amongst those who were united by the closest ties of blood, what deadly malice and hatred must have been enkindled amongst the various clans of which a tribe was composed, or amongst the tribes constituting a province. It was amongst these in particular that reprisals took place and that feuds became hereditary." The members of a clan were bound to render

one another assistance, whether to avenge the murder of one of their number or to obtain compensation for a wrong done to any man of their clan. Hence so many disputes and so many wars.

The lives of the princes and nobles were wholly filled with these rivalries, these enmities, and these armed struggles. From early youth their training and education was such as fitted them for their life of ceaseless warfare. As children they knew nothing of the special care and ministration usually bestowed upon childhood. Beyond seeing that they were provided with food wholesome in quality, but restricted in quantity, their parents manifested little solicitude in their regard. In all these matters they left them pretty much to Nature, and as far as concerned their children's physical well-being, the results were such as fully justified their confidence. Accustomed from their earliest years to a rough life, they grew up strong and tall in stature, lithe and supple in limb, vigorous, and capable of enduring every hardship. According to the verdict of their conquerors they were the very type of manly beauty! and martial prowess. Early trained to ride and to handle arms, in conflict they displayed, with well-nigh fatal rashness, their skill and valour. They never made use of any of the armour in which the Anglo-Norman warrior completely encased his body. They wore no helmet, no coat of mail, no greaves; they dispensed with saddle and spurs. In battle their only arms were a small steel axe, which they wielded with one hand, a long javelin, and some short but very sharp-pointed arrows. Their lives were passed in perpetual warfare, and many of them died with arms in their hands. It may be said that the majority of the Irish kings and princes were assassinated or were killed in battle.

The constant use of arms, their love of fighting, and the continual quarrels and reprisals in which they were engaged, gave to these men an unbridled fierceness and violence of manner. They submitted to no restraint save that of a power superior to their own. But, at the same time, woe to him who, being vanquished, could no longer defend himself. Despoiled of everything, he had no other resource save to become a highway robber, or the leader of bandits like himself.

The lower orders in the tribes were not immune from the evils of

war. They suffered from the depredations and the pillaging of the conqueror. In like manner the strong hand of these powerful chiefs pressed heavily on the Church, and they thwarted the clergy in their labours even within the clan. They coveted alike the Church's high offices and her property.

The method of proceeding observed in the election of a Bishop or an Abbot was only too well calculated to foster their greed. From a desire to respect their unity, Saint Patrick had granted to each tribe a bishopric or an abbacy, selecting for this office a member of the ruling family. Thus the great families became accustomed to regard these episcopal or abbatial offices, with their revenues, as their inalienable patrimony, and to exploit them as private property. Provided a priest could be found amongst the members of the family he was invariably chosen as Bishop or Abbot. But the fact of there being no clerics among their kinsfolk by no means always prevented them from filling the vacant benefice. In such circumstances laymen were appointed to the benefices, the sacred functions of which were discharged by priests who received a stipend for their services. But the titulars, who were genuine usurpers, received the revenues.

In this description one finds it difficult to recognise the Island of Saints, that Ireland once so renowned for learning and sanctity, in whose monasteries science and the arts were cultivated, and who, at the period when continental nations were only slowly emerging from barbarism sent colonies of monks to evangelise them. Christianity, spreading rapidly among the Irish people, had in time softened their manners and improved their natural good qualities. No other people gave to the Christian religion such spontaneous and complete adhesion. No doubt, their disinterestedness, their lively imagination, their tendency to enthusiasm, their innate love of poetry, fitted them better to understand the supernatural beauty of the doctrine of Christianity, and to carry them into effect in their monasteries.

And now we shall see the happy results of Ireland's conversion to Christianity destroyed by the ruin of the monasteries during the Danish invasion. No longer under the influence of religion, the Irish princes lapsed into the barbarism of former times.

This terrible hurricane which in the ninth century swept over the Christian nations of Northern Europe wrought greater havoc in Ireland than elsewhere. The Trish Chieftains were bold and fearless in battle, but they were never united and were badly equipped. Hence they were incapable of prolonged resistance against the Scandinavian invaders. These pirates, once masters of the sea-board, established colonies along the coast, and afterwards ascending the rivers, penetrated inland, everywhere carrying fire and sword. "Not one of the great Irish monasteries, which in the eighth century were still so flourishing, escaped their rapacity. Anchoring their flotillas in the inland lakes, they watched their opportunity to swoop down upon the churches and monasteries. Whey massacred the monks or put them to flight, pillaged the monasteries, rifled the libraries, and then retired, carrying off everything of value. The relics contained in the reliquaries they flung away as worthless."

With the disappearance of the monasteries there vanished also the good effects of the salutary influence of the Christian religion. A great decline in faith and morals then became apparent. "Christian civilisation almost disappeared."

When the storm had passed the other nations revived. They set to work to increase their strength, to become more united, to train themselves in self-discipline under monarchical government. Not so in Ireland. From the time of the Danish invasion we hear of bands of native plunderers roaming the country, and rivalling the Northmen in treachery and vandalism. The invaders finding the coast facing England better suited for the foundation of their colonies withdrew their hordes from the interior, and as soon as they had departed the Irish princes resumed their domestic quarrels,

In the twelfth century the Irish had not learned the necessity for organisation and for union amongst themselves. The coming of another invader, the Anglo-Norman, found them still divided, still exhausting their strength in fratricidal strife, wholly incapable of combined resistance to the common enemy. Thus it was that in the first encounter with the invading forces they were vanquished, dispersed for want of a leader whose authority all would

acknowledge.

This singular condition of affairs in Ireland occasioned amongst strangers more contempt than surprise. From Saint Bernard down to the biographer of Saint Laurence O'Toole, all alike describe country and people as barbarous, "more bestial than human, Christian in name, but in reality purely pagan." In general, the Irish clergy were vastly different. On this point we have the testimony of the Anglo-Normans after the Conquest. They describe them as of irreproachable morals, and leading most regular lives as befitted Churchmen, pious, but of a sad, gloomy piety which led them to shut themselves up within the walls of the cloister. "Nearly all the Irish prelates," wrote Giraldus Cambrensis, "are taken from the monasteries. They discharge their duties as monks faithfully (with anxious care), but wholly omit those of the priest or Bishop." To find the Irish clergy thus utterly ignored, and of no account amongst the people, did indeed cause much surprise to the Anglo-Norman priests, accustomed as they were to see their Bishops frequenting the Court, called upon to take part in the government of the kingdom, seated at the King's council-board, and when necessary boldly defending in his presence the rights of the Church. From what has been said regarding the dependence of the Irish clergy on the clan or tribe we can better understand, and to a certain extent excuse their attitude.

According as barbarous or half-pagan customs began to prevail amongst the nobles, the influence of the clergy over the people of the tribe diminished. They were permitted to worship God within their churches, but they had not authority to recall the people to the observance of His Law and the discipline of the Church. A time had come when the people were learning to do without them.

In the letters of Saint Anselm and of Lanfranc we find fully revealed the evils which afflicted the Church in Ireland. The marriage tie was no longer respected. To avoid having to choose wives outside their own families, men often married within the forbidden degrees of kindred. But, worse still, they were accustomed to exchange their wives, to sell them or repudiate them according to caprice.

Children received no Christian training. Saint Laurence O'Toole, at twelve years of age, had not yet learned the Creed. "People no

longer approached the Sacraments, or, when they did, not unfrequently profaned them. In some remote districts the Sacraments of Penance, Confirmation, and even Baptism, were no longer administered, nor did the dead receive Christian burial."

To the isolation in which the clergy lived must be attributed the decline of their influence. Here again we recognise the unfortunate results of the principle which gave to every tribe their own Bishop and monastery. No doubt, with much difficulty, the Bishop might receive permission to recall to the observance of the Church's discipline those of his own kindred in whose family he lived and to whom he owed his election. But, on the other hand, he had no superior to remind him of his own obligations.

The bond which united the dioceses of Ireland was hardly perceptible. True, the Archbishop of Armagh, the successor of Saint Patrick, was nominally permitted to hold a kind of supremacy over the whole kingdom. But he scarcely ever exercised his authority, save at such times as the tax, known as Saint Patrick's dues, which he levied on all districts were collected. Synods were seldom, if ever, held. How could the Bishops dream of acting in concert when the tribes were perpetually at variance one with the other? "Thus it was that in all matters affecting general discipline each Bishop followed his own particular inclinations. There were as many different liturgies as there were districts." On this point also the letters of the Archbishop of Canterbury enlighten us as to the extent of the evil.

As a result, no doubt, of rivalry and the contentions between those having influence, the number of Bishops increased beyond all reason, quite irrespective of vacant Sees; it would often happen that several Bishops were elected at the one time to the same See.

The ceremony of episcopal consecration was performed mostly by one Bishop. Some Bishops were accustomed to confer Holy Orders for considerations of money. Holy chrism was not used in the administration of Baptism. For all these evils there was but one sole remedy: that the clergy should come forth from their retirement, once more enter into union with the Catholic world, above all resume their relations with Rome, which, since the Danish invasion, had been almost entirely discontinued.

Those who deplored the state of the Church in Ireland at the beginning of the twelfth century, its want of cohesion, its state of utter dependence on the lay rulers, could find no remedy save in the restoration of relations with the Church and her Head, the Pope. The Pope alone possessed sufficient authority to restore somewhat of the life of religion to Ireland, to check abuses, to revive discipline, and to unite the members of the Hierarchy.

The Bishops whose Sees were situated on the coast, having more direct intercourse with the English episcopacy, were the first to grasp the situation and to adopt this course of action.

The Danes after having ravaged Ireland for a long time established themselves on the east coast, and thence advanced towards the South. They divided this territory into three kingdoms, having as their respective capitals Dublin, Waterford, and Limerick. Soon, owing to their energy and their aptitude for commerce, to the intercourse and the traffic which they carried on with England, these places attained such prosperity as they had never known before. In the twelfth century Dublin as a port rivalled London in wealth.

Once rooted in the soil, the Danes soon abandoned their gods and embraced the religion of the nation which they had vanquished. After the lapse of a century the Christians were numerous enough to justify their wish to be ruled by their own Bishops. Dublin was the first of these cities to be raised to the dignity of a See (1036), Limerick being the next to have the privilege. In 1096 the inhabitants of Waterford petitioned Saint Anselm to consecrate as their Bishop a monk of Winchester, named Malchus.

Owing to their intercourse with England, and perhaps, also, because of a feeling of contempt for those indolent Irish who had not known how to retrieve their defeats, these newly Christianised colonies at once placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the Archbishops of Canterbury. Therefore, nothing was more natural than the care taken henceforth by Saint Anselm and Lanfranc of these new dioceses. Lanfranc presented the church in Dublin with books, vestments, and a complete set of church furniture.

Anselm maintained a constant correspondence with these Bishops.

It would seem that the Archbishops of Canterbury wanted, even though it were but by slow degrees, to extend their jurisdiction over the whole of Ireland. They availed themselves of every opportunity to write to the Ard Righ urging him to remedy the evils which afflicted the Church. Saint Anselm notified his accession to the See of Canterbury to all the Bishops (*ac coeteris in Hiberniae insula pontificali eminentibus dignitate*), and invited them to submit their difficulties to that See. "And in this manner they would be able to extend the Roman customs which prevailed in the metropolis of England to the shores of Ireland, whilst they awaited the time when these would penetrate further into the provinces."

One of the most ardent in this propaganda was Gilbert, the Bishop of Limerick. Previous to his elevation to the episcopate he had met Saint Anselm at Rouen, and became bound to him by the ties of friendship. It was to be expected that he, more than all others, should follow the suggestions of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Scarcely had he been raised to the See of Limerick when Anselm wrote to him urging him to exhort the King and the Bishops to check abuses and to labour for the spread of good morals.

Gilbert replied to this appeal by publishing a short treatise, *De usu ecclesiastico*, which he dedicated to the clergy of Ireland. In it he insisted on two points: concord in all that concerned the liturgy, and unity amongst the members of the Hierarchy. He qualified as unseemly and schismatical the liturgical differences to be found in every Irish diocese. "They must give place," he wrote, "to the Roman Office, which alone is Catholic. Whosoever calls himself a member of the Catholic Church is united to the other members by one and the same faith, one and the same hope, one and the same charity. Let him be united with them likewise in the observance of the rules imposed by the Hierarchy." He then explained the constitution of the Church, described the order and subordination of the ecclesiastical degrees, and specified distinctly the rights and the duties of the Pope and of the Bishops.

The little book attracted attention abroad. It obtained for its author the title and the office of Papal Legate in Ireland. It would seem to have been equally well received by the Bishops to whom it was dedicated. But the counsels and the directions it contained were

only to come into practice by degrees.

Jealousies and political intrigues had their part in thwarting this effort to restore unity. To withdraw his kingdom from the influence of the North, the King of Munster tried to weaken the authority of the Primate, the Archbishop of Armagh, by creating in the very centre of his dominions a large independent See. A Synod held in 1118, under the presidency of Gilbert the Legate, and composed almost entirely of the southern Bishops, ratified the erection of Cashel to an archdiocese. They wanted also to limit the number of episcopal Sees by placing twelve under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Armagh, and an equal number under the Archbishop of Cashel. This decision, however, was not carried out. We find afterwards the number of bishoprics still increasing. At the Synod of 1152, when many of the small Sees were abolished, thirty-eight were retained. Meanwhile the seed sown by Gilbert was bearing fruit. When the Bishop of Limerick, having grown old, found the burthen of his office as Papal Legate pressing too heavily upon him, the Church in Ireland looked to another prelate who was to take his place and to continue his work.

Malachi had received his early training from a saintly recluse of Armagh, who was an ardent advocate of ecclesiastical reform. He was also one of those who recognised that there was no hope save in Rome. Malachi's labours, throughout his whole life, were devoted to the task of inducing the clergy to conform to the Roman liturgy and practices. Whilst yet young, the Archbishop of Armagh had appointed him his assistant in the administration of the affairs of his diocese. A few years later Malachi himself was elected to the See of Armagh. Acting on Gilbert's advice, in 1139 he set out for Rome with the object of defending the supremacy of his See, and of maintaining the unity of the Church in Ireland. On his way to the Eternal City he halted at Clairvaux, attracted thither by the fame of Saint Bernard. Nowhere could he have found a better ally or one better fitted to assist him in his task. Bernard sent to Ireland a number of his monks to introduce monastic reform. It is to be presumed that it was Saint Bernard who, after Saint Malachi's death, suggested to Pope Eugenius III, his disciple, the permanent establishment of the office of Legate in Ireland, that thus the question of the dioceses might be settled definitely.

Malachi returned from Rome charged with the duties and the title of Papal Legate. His mission was to take counsel with the Bishops concerning the investiture of the two Archbishops with the pallium. It may well be that he regarded the time as unfavourable for the discharge of his trust. For we find that the Synod was not convoked until 1148. The Bishops then confirmed the decision of the Synod held in 1118, and again requested that the pallium should be given to the two Archbishops, praying the Legate to present their petition to the Pope. Once more Malachi took the road to Rome. But he was not to reach his destination. He died at Clairvaux in the arms of Saint Bernard.

The Irish Legates, notwithstanding their zeal, did not succeed in settling definitely the number and the extent of the dioceses. No permanent results could be secured without more direct intervention on the part of the Pope. A few years after Malachi's death, Cardinal Paparo arrived in Ireland as Legate *a latere* to settle the ecclesiastical questions still pending. At a Synod held in 1152 the number of dioceses was reduced to thirty-eight, and Ireland was divided into four provinces. Dublin, hitherto subject to Canterbury, was raised to an archdiocese with five suffragans; Tuam made the fourth.

We are now about to trace the career of Saint Laurence O'Toole as Archbishop of Dublin. We shall see with what zeal and authority in his twofold office of Archbishop and Papal Legate he continued the work which both Gilbert and Malachi had so much at heart.

Chapter 2 - Childhood of Laurence (1128-1140)

Laurence's family - Laurence is given as Hostage for Peace to the Dynast of Kildare - His Baptism - He is delivered as Hostage to the King of Leinster - The Wilderness of Ferns - Dermot sends him to the Bishop of Glendalough

Somewhat to the south of Dublin two petty kingdoms, contiguous to each other, Hy-Muireadhaigh (Hy-Murray) and Hy Faelan, formed, on that side the northern frontier of Leinster, one of the five provinces of Ireland.

Hy-Faelan, which the Wicklow Mountains alone separated from the sea, was inhabited by the clan of the O'Byrnes. Situated a little further west, Hy- Murray was occupied by the sept of the O'Tooles. Hy-Faelan comprised the greater part of the north-east portion of the present County Kildare, whilst the kingdom of Hy-Murray consisted mainly of the baronies of Kilkea, Moone, Narragh, Rheban, and part of the barony of Gonnell. The family of the O'Tooles, who ruled over Hy-Murray, ranked among the most ancient in Ireland, tracing their origin to the second century of the Christian era. Throughout the ages the O'Tooles had reigned in Leinster until, at length, weakened by disputes and divisions, they were supplanted in the government of the kingdom by Dermot MacMurrough, and reduced to the rank of a mere tribe. Nevertheless, the chief of the O'Tooles, equally with the head of the O' Byrnes, always assumed the title of King. Hence Saint Laurence's biographer could say, with truth, that he was of royal birth, both parents being of blood royal, Maurice, King of Hy-Murray, having married a daughter of O'Byrne, King of Hy-Faelan. Six sons and one daughter, named Mor, had been already born to the royal pair, when, about the year 1128, our Saint, the youngest of the family, opened his eyes upon this world. Chosen by God to be an apostle of peace to his country, Laurence was destined to suffer throughout his whole life from the dissensions between the various clans. At the time of the Saint's birth, peace had just been concluded between his father and a neighbour, Donat, dynast of Kildare, with whom he

had been at variance. To seal the treaty of peace, Maurice sent his new-born son to Donat, requesting him to have the infant baptised.

The child was entrusted to a small band of Maurice's retainers who forthwith set out for Kildare. They had gone but a short distance on their journey when they were stopped by a bard of venerable appearance. In Ireland the bards had taken the place once held by the Druids, and had inherited their authority also. Like their predecessors, the bards were musicians and skilled in improvising, whilst the people gave willing credence to their alleged power of prophecy. Regarding the child for a moment, the stranger inquired of the escort what name he was to receive in Baptism. Maurice had chosen for his son the name of one of Ulster's mightiest heroes, Conconor. Did this name recall to the bard too many memories of war and bloodshed?

"No," said the old man, "call him Laurence." Then, in a brief improvisation, he predicted that the child should be exalted above all, rich and poor alike, and should have great glory both on earth and in Heaven. Seeing that the retainers hesitated to disobey their master's orders, the bard continued: "Have no fear, I shall be at your lord's house this evening, and I shall explain to him my reasons for making this change."

In their turn, the Saint's biographers find in this name, Laurence, a prediction of the laurels which should one day wreath his brow. Equally was it of happy augury for the child that he should receive the regenerating waters of Baptism in one of Ireland's most venerated sanctuaries, Kildare, famous throughout the land for the sacred memories which gathered round it, of Saint Brigid and the monastery which she had founded.

On reaching Kildare the little band were welcomed joyfully by Donat. Taking in his arms the infant thus sent as a pledge of peace and friendship, he carried him to the Bishop, who baptised him, bestowing upon him the name of Laurence, as the bard had desired.

How long did Laurence remain in Kildare? In reality, he was a hostage in the hands of Donat. Moreover, it was the custom, as is well known, for the kings and nobles to have their sons brought up in the households of other nobles who thus became their foster-

fathers, a sort of legal tie or kinship being established between these nobles and the actual parents of the children. The Canon of Eu, ignorant of this custom, and wanting in information concerning that period of the Saint's life, discourses in vague sentences on the child's happy disposition and the progress which he made so far beyond other boys of his age.

Our next meeting with Laurence is in his father's house where we find him, at the age of ten, on the eve of an exile infinitely more painful than the first. Hostilities between the O'Tooles and their hereditary enemy, the King of Leinster, had broken out afresh. The whole tribe had much to fear from so implacable an adversary. Maurice took counsel with his people. No other means remained to him by which Dermot's wrath might be appeased, but to deliver to him as hostage his youngest son. Amongst Ireland's warrior-kings there is no more hateful figure than this King of Leinster whose name recurs so frequently in our Saint's life. Imperious, tyrannical, quarrelsome, harsh, even ferocious, feared by his neighbours by reason of his fierce disposition, by his people for his deeds of violence, Dermot's life was one continual scene of warfare.

Usually, the sons of noble houses held as hostages were treated with consideration. But Dermot was incapable of any generous sentiment. He wreaked upon the child the anger which he cherished towards the father. Nor far from his stronghold of Ferns was a stony, barren tract of land, the soil of which barely yielded sustenance for the inhabitants, a desolate region where one found neither corn, nor wine, nor oil. Hither young Laurence was brought in chains, and here, in want of everything, even of bread, he spent two years. Without shelter, badly clad, badly fed, suffering cold and hunger, the boy was forced to spend his days in the performance of menial and degrading tasks. Soon, in appearance, he resembled a wretched beggar. From the account given by the Canon of Eu, one is led to suppose that he was attacked by a skin disease which covered his body from head to foot. In his exterior he inspired nothing but sentiments of disgust.

At last news of the ill-usage to which his child was subjected reached Maurice. Taking prisoners twelve of Dermot's soldiers, the outraged father sent his enemy word that these should be put to

death if his son were not restored to him with the least possible delay. Dermot submitted. The King of Leinster knew that his rival would not hesitate an instant in carrying out his threat; perhaps, too, he feared that his noncompliance with the demand might lead to the coalition against him of the other lesser kings. He preferred to restore the child and thus deliver his soldiers. But he would not treat directly with Maurice. The Bishop of Glendalough was commissioned to act as intermediary; and to him Dermot sent the child, enjoining strictly that he should not be restored to his father until the latter had released Dermot's soldiers.

Chapter 3 - Vocation - The Cloister (1140-1153)

Maurice O'Toole at Glendalough - Laurence declares his Vocation - He is given in charge to the Bishop - Monastic Life at Glendalough - Saint Kevin's Cave

Glendalough was not subject to Maurice's rule. Situated a little to the south of Hy-Murray within the territory of another tribe, that of Imaile, it formed between the belligerents a sort of neutral ground. For this reason Dermot had chosen it as the place where young Laurence should remain until the exchange with his soldiers had been effected. Glendalough was also the seat of a bishopric and of an important monastery, both being under episcopal jurisdiction. Whilst awaiting Maurice's arrival, the Bishop confided the boy to the care of his chaplain.

Those few days spent in a cloister and in the society of a priest seem to have had a decisive influence on Laurence's future. During his prolonged absence from his home the child's training and religious education had been wholly neglected. His young charge's ignorance of things spiritual was soon apparent to the chaplain, and he at once applied himself to the task of instructing him. "Like a wise host he looked to the wants of both soul and body. He not merely took pains to restore health, but at the same time strove to strengthen the soul. In a few days he had taught Laurence the Our Father and the first principles of faith, that is to say the *Credo*." For Laurence at the age which he had then reached, and after the work wrought within him unknown to himself, perhaps, during those two years of exile, the acquisition of this knowledge no longer represented a mere exercise of memory. His mind, naturally religious, eagerly drank in these first teachings. This sudden revelation of God and of His merciful goodness to man filled him with indescribable emotion. And for this youth, from infancy the victim of hatred and ill-will, what a charm in the kindliness of these priests and in the peace and calm of the cloister!

On the thirteenth day Maurice arrived filled with joy at once more

beholding his child. In token of his gratitude to God, he begged the Bishop to decide by lot which of his sons should enter religion. It may be questioned whether this request was not prompted by some motive of self-interest. It but too frequently happened that the nobles sought to obtain for some member of their family elevation to a bishopric or abbacy. No career was open to their sons save in the Church or the profession of arms. But Maurice would seem to have been inspired by no other sentiment than that of gratitude for the restoration of his child. For as Glendalough was not a dependency of his tribe he could lay no claim to either of its two benefices.

Before the Bishop could reply to this petition, young Laurence, with smiling countenance, exclaimed: "That is unnecessary. If you will give your permission, father, I shall willingly become a priest. All that I have I renounce and abandon to the lovers of the world." All present rejoiced at this announcement: the father who found his desires thus easily realised, the Bishop and his clergy who had already become attached to Laurence. Taking his son by the hand, Maurice offered him to God under the patronage of Saint Kevin to whom both the cathedral and the monastery were dedicated. Then committing the boy to the Bishop's care, he begged the latter to make of him a priest of God, who by his virtue and learning might prove worthy of his sacred calling.

In the youthful Laurence's education secular knowledge and religious training went hand in hand. If somewhat confounded by the ignorance in which he had grown up, he applied himself with ardour to the study of human science, still more earnestly did he labour to profit by everything around him which could lead him to virtue. To this end nothing could be more conducive than the abode of peace, of silence, and of prayer in which he found himself. Under the fructifying action of divine grace and the enlightened and paternal direction of the Bishop, the whole of his spiritual nature grew strong and flourished like some fair young tree; the sap, long dormant, rose vigorously and spread itself in rich abundance through all the branches. It was, indeed, a marvellous springtime!

The example and the kindness of the Bishop, the fraternal affection of the older monks, contributed to his edification, and rendered him

still more enamoured of cloister life. The beauty of the surrounding scenery and the hallowed memories of the saintly founder which hung around the monastery had no small share in the uplifting of Laurence's soul to God, and helped to sustain him in his efforts to lead the life of a true religious.

The region in which lies the valley of Glendalough is regarded, and justly so, as one of the fairest in Ireland. Sheltered from the cold sea-breezes by the wooded hills of Wicklow, towards the interior, the ground in successive graduated terraces becomes lower, the valleys thus formed being watered by numerous streams fed by the water-courses which scar the mountain sides. Well indeed does Glendalough merit its name - valley of the two lakes! Several streams meet in the valley, their united waters forming the river Avoca. Fair land of emerald green, "With its beautiful round tower and its ancient churches built on the shore of a lake in the middle of a verdant moraine."

Everywhere throughout the valley numerous memorials recall the memory of the sainted Abbot who, in the sixth century, founded the monastery of Glendalough. Built on swamps and stagnant water, a causeway, the work of Saint Kevin's hands, traverses the whole valley. Hollowed in the mountain side, a cave is shown, fashioned by the Saint himself as a retreat where, withdrawn from all intercourse with the world, he passed days and nights in prayer and penance. And what countless legends are told of the Saint - pious traditions, in which is preserved the memory of Kevin's inexhaustible benevolence, together with his wondrous power, resulting from his stainless purity, over all Nature. We are told of the willow at his prayer producing apples which cured the sick, of the birds obedient to his voice and confident of his tenderness depositing their young on his hand, when he prayed, with his arms outstretched in the form of a cross.

The monasteries, at that time, were becoming once more, as of old, peaceful, assured retreats for chosen souls, centres of learning and culture; within them monastic discipline again flourished. For a religious, according to his Rule, each day was divided between prayer, study, and manual labour. Some of the monks were employed in the cultivation of the lands belonging to the

monastery, others of greater ability were engaged in more skilled occupations: "To tend the flocks and herds, to gather the harvest, thresh and grind the corn in the small handmills; such were the more usual manual occupations. But the monasteries had also their own mechanics, goldsmiths, copyists, illuminators on vellum."

Apart from the liturgical chanting, music also had its place in the life of the Religious. The aptitude of the Irish for this art is well-known. The bards, in particular, excelled therein. We are told that on the occasion of their first invasion of Ireland, the English archers stood still, ravished by the harmonies which the native minstrels drew from their instruments. They knew not which to admire most, the scientific arrangement of their compositions, or the rapidity with which their fingers swept the strings, drawing forth floods of harmony. Theclergy were equally assiduous in the cultivation of this art. The Bishops, the Abbots, the Saints (says Giraldus) had their harps which they carried everywhere with them. At Glendalough, amongst other relics, was shown Saint Kevin's harp.

Such of the religious as felt the need of withdrawing for a time into solitude to engage in more profound contemplation, and to practise greater austerities, were wont to choose lonely places not far removed from the monastery. Specially suited for such a purpose was the cave at Glendalough, hallowed by its association with Saint Kevin. We cannot doubt but that Laurence, when grown to manhood, acquired the habit which he retained as Bishop, of withdrawing to this remote spot, there to spend in deeper recollection and severer penance the holy season of Lent.

Chapter 4 - Abbot of Glendalough (1153-1161)

Early days as Abbot - Silent Hostility of the Religious - Country infested with Robbers; the Country laid desolate - Laurence labours to remedy these evils; His Prayer - The Robbers punished - Laurence's Charity; his good works - Laurence refuses the Bishopric of Glendalough

Describing Laurence as he was at twenty-five years of age, his biographer writes: "He combined purity of life with high intellectual attainments. His learning added lustre to his sanctity." He had just been raised to the priesthood, the ceremony of ordination being performed by his Bishop, Gilla-na-Naem II. When the death took place of the Abbot of Glendalough, Laurence mourned deeply for the loss of his spiritual father. What, indeed, did he not owe to him? The strengthening of his vocation, the happy, fruitful years spent in the cloister, the priestly character which was the crown and completion of the work of those years; for all these he was indebted to his departed father and guide.

It now became necessary to choose a successor to the late Abbot. It sometimes happened that the twofold office of Bishop and Abbot was filled by one person, but at Glendalough the office of Abbot was, for . the country, of far greater importance. Glendalough, owing to the devotion manifested by the Irish people to Saint Kevin, became one of the most famous shrines in Ireland, whilst the monastery, from the very beginning, had ranked amongst the most important of the monastic foundations. In the life-time of the Sainted Founder several thousand religious could have been received at Glendalough. The Danish invaders had not wholly despoiled the monastery of its lands, and these were, for a great number of the dependents, a source of much profit. Hence it was that the laity who took part in the Abbot's election and whose suffrage gave them an easy victory over the clergy were accustomed always to choose for the vacant office a member of one of the noblest families, ‘ in order to secure for the whole country powerful protectors." It was but natural, then, that from the very beginning, the son of Maurice O'Toole, king of a neighbouring powerful tribe,

should be singled out for election. His brethren in religion bore testimony to the purity of his life, to his virtue, already, at that early age, so mature, and to the ardent zeal for religion, by which he was animated. Accordingly, by the unanimous voice of the electors our Saint was chosen Abbot.

Ever accustomed to commit himself to the guidance of Divine Providence, Laurence could not but recognise in this unanimity a manifestation of God's will in his regard which he dared not oppose. He accepted the office, not without apprehension. During the years spent in the religious life he had gained experience which enabled him now to foresee the difficulties which would arise.

First of all, to his direction, his authority, would his brethren in religion always submit? Might it not happen that some amongst them who, with a laudable eagerness had joined with the laity in electing him, would be tempted to yield to him but forced obedience, or even to oppose him by underhand resistance, and thus introduce into the monastery disunion and the spirit of mischief. In the eyes of religious, the most eminent virtue, the most prudent direction, cannot supply for the want of that authority conferred by age and long experience in the direction of souls. Moreover, if the very first promptings of a rebellious spirit are not crushed by the power of faith, then amongst religious the evil spreads rapidly owing to their close daily intercourse with one another, and the inevitable resultant contradictions.

To what cause must this opposition be attributed in the present instance? Was it occasioned by the Abbot's sternness, his severity in ruling, or the jealousy of some among his subjects? Laurence was not ignorant of the murmurings against his authority, the ill-will felt towards him; he had to bear with underhand hostility, with the spreading abroad of complaints against him. So serious were the dissensions in the monastery that even as late as the time when the Canon of Eu wrote, the remembrance of them still survived.

A young Abbot who allowed his zeal to outstrip his discretion would have been led into enforcing his authority still more sternly, would have used still greater severity in dealing with all faults against monastic discipline; Laurence, on the contrary, laboured by the sweetness of his charity to win the hearts of those erring

brethren, and he succeeded. He closed his ears to their murmurings; he feigned ignorance of their opposition, their secret intrigues. By his patience, his self-denial, his unalterable kindness, he triumphed over these perverse spirits.

But now the Saint's attention was claimed by evils of another kind existing outside the monastery which caused him deep anxiety. Much distress, occasioned by great scarcity of food, prevailed amongst the people. In those parts where the extent of the pasture lands left but little space for the growing of corn, a single bad season sufficed to cause famine throughout a large stretch of country. Laurence's heart was deeply moved by the suffering of his people. All the resources of the monastery were requisitioned for their assistance. By nature a lover of the poor, his compassion for them was inexhaustible. When they sought the monastery he received them with kindness, and none went away unrelieved.

As if the measure of their misfortunes had not been filled by the failure of their crops, these poor people had to suffer still more, owing to the insecure state of the country and the depredations of thieves. The wooded mountains of Wicklow afforded safe hiding places for gangs of robbers who, descending suddenly from their mountain lairs, swooped down upon defenceless travellers and lonely dwellings, in each case despoiling their victims of all that they possessed. Amongst these marauders were to be found the degenerate scions of noble houses, and even in one instance a member of a royal house was one of the number. In illustration of their brutality the Canon of Eu relates two facts. It would appear that the band of which the prince was the leader had some special animosity to Laurence's people, for more than all others these suffered from their assaults, sometimes being attacked openly, at others falling into snares set for them by the enemy. One day as they were carrying from a neighbouring place corn and honey for the relief of the starving people, the prince and his band suddenly fell upon them, furiously assaulting the laity, stripping the clergy and insulting the women.

One can imagine the overwhelming sorrow which this news occasioned Laurence. To assemble his friends and his followers and send them in pursuit of the robbers and their leader was, no doubt,

the course of action those around him expected he would take. But all resort to force, even in a lawful cause, was repugnant to the Saint. He preferred to leave to God the punishment of the guilty. Going to the church he remained there long hours in continuous prayer and fasting that God might deliver his people from these bandits. The answer to his prayers was not long delayed. Three days after the occurrence the prince fell into the hands of some armed men; but being of royal blood they did not dare to put him to death without the consent of the King. As some measure of satisfaction, they put out his eyes and then set him at liberty. The unhappy prince did not long survive the terrible punishment.

But even now peace was not restored to Glendalough. Other robber-bands continued to infest the country, and these seemed to work even greater havoc and desolation. Three of these bands, each led by a different leader, used, in turn, to visit the neighbourhood, attacking everyone, laity and religious alike. People no longer dared to travel, save in bands, and accompanied by priests, who, in the hope of ensuring the safety of the travellers, carried the Blessed Sacrament suspended from their necks in a small bag. But nothing could restrain the savage lawlessness of the bandits. One day, as they lay in ambush in the thickets bordering the road made by Saint Kevin, they became aware of a large body of travellers advancing towards them, accompanied by four priests carrying the Blessed Sacrament in procession. Suddenly, rushing out from their hiding-place, they flung themselves on the priests, tore the Blessed Sacrament from them, and first chewing the Sacred Host, they then trampled It under foot. They next attacked the travellers, beat them unmercifully and left them half-dead upon the road.

Laurence's grief reached its climax at the news of this fresh crime. He, whom his people called the Father of his country, mourned bitterly his powerlessness to protect them from such terrible evils which in his sorrow, he attributed to his own sins. On this occasion, also, he refused to avail himself for his people's protection of the large forces which by right of his rank as Abbot and the nobility of his family he could have summoned to his assistance. Prayer was his supreme refuge. Calling his monks together, he spent an entire day in fasting and uninterrupted supplication to Heaven for the deliverance of his people. His prayer was heard. Scarcely a week

had elapsed when the robber chiefs were taken prisoner by the King's officers who had at last interfered on the persecuted people's behalf. Two of the criminals were hanged by the roadside at the very spot where they had committed their sacrilegious crime.

Glendalough itself was the scene of the execution of the third. Thither he was brought, and on the side of a hill which dominated the whole country he was suspended from a gibbet within sight of the people as they passed to the church. that all might know of the punishment inflicted by Divine Justice on him who had committed such awful sacrilege.

Four years had passed thus, four years of sorrow and tribulation, during which Laurence knew no rest. But now, harmony once more restored within the monastery and peace reigning without, the Saint applied himself to the task of relieving the misery wrought amongst the people during those years of suffering. Famine and pillage, so long endured, had reduced them to the lowest depths of poverty, and Laurence was obliged to continue affording them relief. He did so with boundless liberality, multiplying his alms, and dispensing in works of mercy all the means at his disposal. His father, for greater security, had placed all his wealth in the keeping of the monastery, and when their own resources, large as they were, became exhausted, the Saint did not hesitate to draw from it for the relief of the poor. His compassion was not satisfied with merely relieving the bodily wants of the sufferers. He was still more deeply touched by the spiritual poverty of these people who, having no place of worship, were consequently deprived of the supernatural aids ensured by the presence of the priest and the celebration of the offices of the Church. Hence, whilst distributing relief to the communities adjacent to or dependent on the monastery, at the same time he took care to provide for the erection of churches in their midst.

Henceforth, as his biographer remarks, it would seem that charity was, indeed, Saint Laurence's predominant virtue. As the simplicity which he observed amongst his religious, in all respects living as one of them, had restored to him the allegiance of those subjects who, for a short time, had proved rebellious, so now this charity, so quickly excited by suffering of any kind, won for him the hearts of

all who came in contact with him. Thus it was that on the death of Bishop Gilda, he was unanimously chosen to fill the vacant See (1157).

Although it seems that Laurence had then reached the canonical age, yet he resisted the pressing entreaties of both laity and religious, and refused to accept the episcopal dignity, alleging, in excuse, his youth and inexperience. To one so deeply impressed with the gravity of his obligations, it must indeed have seemed impossible that he could discharge the duties of both offices. The life of an Abbot, a life of silence, of recollection, of prayer, of study, was passed entirely within the shadow of the cloister. The monastery gates, closed against worldly distractions, were only opened for the dispensing of alms. On the other hand, the care of his flock absorbs the Bishop's whole thoughts, occupies all his time, never is he free from it, his every act is inspired by it; by his activity in his diocese can his zeal be measured. True, many of these Abbot-bishops, powerless to maintain between the nobles a peace, at all times precarious, powerless to enforce respect for the laws of the Church, discouraged by their failure, remained shut up in their monasteries, confining themselves to the duties of their office as Abbots. It was this supineness which gave cause for the reproach addressed to them by the English clergy.

The conception formed by Saint Laurence of the responsibilities attaching to the episcopal office was too exalted to permit of him ever resigning himself to such forced inaction. As Bishop he would, at any cost, fulfil his obligations. He preferred, therefore, to remain simply Abbot of Glendalough. For some years longer he continued to lead that same life of holiness and charity which has from the beginning excited our admiration. But the time came at last when in the full maturity of his manhood he was chosen by God to fill one of the principal Sees in Ireland.

(Modern biographers give five years as the term of his office as Abbot of Glendalough, but he held it for a longer time. Having related the tribulations of his first four years as Abbot, and his refusal of the Bishopric of Glendalough, the Canon of Eu continues, *Procedente namque non modico tempore*.)

Chapter 5 - Archbishop of Dublin (1162-1170)

Death of the Archbishop of Dublin - Laurence chosen as his Successor - Reformed Rule of Arrouaise accepted by the Chapter - Laurence lives in Community with the Canons - The Archbishop's House - Relations with his People - Clergy trained in his School - His Nephew, Thomas, Abbot of Glendalough - Laurence retires to Saint Kevin's Cave

The death of Archbishop Gregory on the 8th October, 1161, rendered vacant the archiepiscopal See of Dublin. The principal city of the Danish colonies on the east coast, Dublin was the first erected to a bishopric under the protection of Canterbury, to which See, until the Synod of 1152, presided over by Cardinal Paparo, it had remained dependent. From Canterbury, at the very beginning, had come the relics to be placed in the cathedral, amongst which was a stone from the tomb of Saint Audoen, Bishop of Rouen. Later, Lanfranc had generously supplied all the requisites for divine worship. The letters of Saint Anselm show him to us engrossed in the task of having the books, vestments, and church ornaments presented by Lanfranc restored to the Dublin cathedral, Bishop Samuel having too lavishly distributed these amongst his own people.

At the Synod of Kells in 1152, when the Church in Ireland and its Hierarchy was brought more into harmony with universal custom,

Dublin became one of the four archiepiscopal Sees, having as suffragans the Bishops of Glendalough, Ferns, Ossory, and Kildare and Leighlin. This arrangement, however, of the Synod which changed the diocesan boundaries and suppressed a number of small bishoprics did not come into full effect until after the Anglo-Norman conquest. Up to that time the septs and their petty kings were too much interested in maintaining the ancient order of things to submit forthwith to the mandates of the Synod. To the archdiocese of Dublin, which as yet only comprised the city and some strongholds along the coast towards the south, was assigned half of the country within the jurisdiction of the See of Glendalough. But in reality it was not until the coming of Henry II, who interfered in the matter, that this arrangement was carried out.

The noblest families strove with the most illustrious members of the clergy for the honour of giving an Archbishop to the See of Dublin, now become one of the greatest in Ireland. Some happy influence seems to have guided the election. Left wholly free, the electors following their inclinations resolved to choose their Bishop from amongst the members of some religious community. For they rightly regarded monastic training as the best preparation for the episcopate. Now the monastery at Glendalough was nearer than any other to Dublin, and the charity and priestly virtues of the Abbot Laurence were long well known in the city. The son of a king, he was by birth the equal of the proudest families. Therefore, after some hesitation, he was unanimously chosen as Archbishop.

Frightened at such a heavy charge the Saint would fain have refused. But how could he oppose the will of God so clearly manifest in the unanimity of the electors? The ceremony of consecration was carried out with more than usual splendour. It was, indeed, the first time that a Bishop of Dublin had received consecration at the hands of an Irish prelate. To the people's great joy the new Archbishop of Dublin, Laurence O'Toole, was consecrated in the cathedral by the Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland, surrounded by many Bishops.

Situated at the mouth of the Liffey, about midway on the coast facing England, Dublin afforded easy access to all parts of Ireland, and consequently was pre-eminently fitted to become the emporium

for all the trading of the interior of the island with foreign parts. The Danes, a practical people, possessed of remarkable aptitude for commerce, had grasped this fact. Several times driven by the inhabitants out of Dublin, they had on each occasion returned, and at last succeeded in taking the city in which they settled permanently. Under their rule Dublin rapidly attained such size and importance that a contemporary writer does not hesitate to place it on a parallel with London.

But if the prosperity of the city had developed so quickly, the same cannot be said of the influence of religion amongst a floating population and one wholly immersed in business. The stir and bustle of a great seaport, the continual anxieties of commercial enterprise, and the free and easy manner of living of a purely mercantile population, were so many obstacles to any effective influence of Christian teaching on their minds and morals.

We know nothing concerning the labours of Laurence's predecessors amidst such unpromising surroundings. Owing to its growth, the city would seem to have been wanting in places of worship. Throughout the whole of his episcopate, the building of churches and the organising of parishes constituted one of the most anxious labours of the new Archbishop.

Above all things, Laurence desired the assistance of coadjutors, animated with his own spirit. His first care was for the reform of the clergy. The Cathedral was served by Canons, who lived the life of secular priests. Inspired by an idea which Saint Malachi had wished to: see carried out everywhere in Ireland, Laurence induced his Canons to lead a community life and to follow the Rule of Arrouaise. The movement for reform inaugurated in the eleventh century in France, by degrees had won to it the Cathedral Chapters and those of collegiate churches. The Canons had resumed a kind of community life, based on the Rule of Saint Augustine, and closely resembling monastic life. A small abbey in the diocese of Arras was the first centre whence the reform spread over the whole of the North. At the time of his first journey to Rome, Saint Malachi, attracted by the renown of this abbey which the austerity of its first Abbot and the encouragement of the Popes had already rendered famous, tarried there. He studied its customs, and, when leaving,

took with him the book of rules and other liturgical manuscripts, which he proposed to make known amongst the Irish clergy. The ascendancy gained over him afterwards by the Abbot of Clairvaux did not efface the impression made upon him by Arrouaise. And in the decision made by Laurence at the beginning of his episcopate, we can recognise the effect of the propaganda which Saint Malachi had resolved to undertake in favour of the reform.

Yielding to the exhortations of their Archbishop, the Canons of the Dublin Cathedral accepted this Rule, and in the cloister adjoining the Cathedral Chapter began once more to live in community, observing the regular practices of a religious community. Conformably to the custom at Arrouaise, two of the Canons were sent as delegates to Rome to lay their resolution at the feet of the Pope.

It is not known if some of the French Canons came to Ireland to initiate these Canons of the Dublin Cathedral into the observance of the Rule. But the most ancient liturgical books of the Cathedral which remain to us indicate an origin which closely connects them with that quarter. This is the more remarkable, inasmuch as the Church in Dublin must have received in the beginning from the See of Canterbury a liturgy closely resembling that of Rome.

Henceforth, the daily chanting of the Divine Office in public, that official function assigned to Cathedral Chapters, took place with a regularity and a solemnity hitherto unknown. The trained voices of the Canons Regular did full justice to the Gregorian melodies, rendering them in all their sweetness, and thus contributing not a little to the beauty and solemnity of the Divine Office.

Laurence, delighted to find the reformed Canons practising all the observances of monastic life, laboured to live as one of them, setting them in all things an example of holiness, sharing their meals in the common refectory, like them observing silence at the times and in the places prescribed; still more effectually to mark the closeness of his association with them, he wore the white habit of the Canons of Saint Augustine under his episcopal robes. Assiduous in his attendance at the night Office, when at dawn the Canons left the choir and returned to their cells, the Archbishop, kneeling at the foot of a crucifix, much venerated by the people of Dublin and the

surrounding neighbourhood, would remain in prolonged prayer; then, with the advent of morning, he rose and walking to and fro in the churchyard, would recite the Office of the Dead for the souls of those. buried therein.

This tender piety, this habit of prayer, never was allowed to interfere with the discharge of his duties as Archbishop nor the obligations imposed upon him by his exalted dignity. Like the Bishops of those times who were accustomed to manage the property of their dioceses and to sit in the assemblies of the great, his household consisted of his clergy, a seneschal, bailiffs, and the other officers of his suite. But the poor were the first to profit by the revenues of his diocese. Apart from the help which he gave with his own hands or through the medium of his bailiffs, a number of poor men, never less than thirty, often sixty, were fed daily in his presence.

At public ceremonies he appeared in costly vestments, as befitted his rank, but beneath the Canon's robe he wore a hair-shirt, which, for greater mortification he never changed, in that resembling his illustrious contemporary, Thomas a Becket, whom Bossuet has styled "the martyr to penance." Accustomed as he was, from the time that he adopted the Rule of Arrouaise, to perpetual abstinence, on Fridays his only sustenance consisted of bread and water. But no trace of this austerity was ever apparent in his intercourse with his diocesans. He received them with kindly courtesy and when he entertained them, "he knew," says his biographer, "how to offer to his guests splendid hospitality, placing before them viands and wines of every kind." But, retaining in the midst of all this abundance his mortified habits, he chose for himself the plainest dishes, whilst his wine was so copiously diluted with water as to have none of the qualities of wine save the colour.

For those clergy admitted to close intimacy with him, his society was as a school of exalted virtue. It is not surprising that from opposite parts of Ireland they came to seek their Bishops from amongst them. Of the Bishops thus chosen, Albin of Ferns and Marianus of Cork will bear testimony later at the process for his canonisation how deeply they had been edified by the example of the sainted Archbishop. Laurence's nephew, Thomas, who had

followed him from Glendalough to Dublin, was called to rule over a monastery. In the appointment of a successor to the Saint at Glendalough, the canonical rules had been disregarded. The rightful electors, the monks and the dependents of the Abbey, found themselves thrust aside, and their claim to choose their Abbot ignored. Dermot, King of Leinster, with his customary violence, interfered with the election, and forced the electors to accept a protégé of his own, a cleric named Benignus. Compelled to yield, they gave the Abbot thus thrust upon them but half-hearted, unwilling obedience. For some years Benignus continued to rule over the monastery. We find his signature as Abbot appended to the deed of endowment of the Priory of All Saints, near Dublin, bearing date 1166. But, already, a formidable coalition against Dermot was being effected. All the hatred which, throughout the course of his long life, he had excited by his quarrelsome disposition, his brutality, his deeds of violence, was now about to be let loose upon him with accumulated force.

Amongst the most implacable of his enemies ranked the tribe of the O'Tooles, burning as they were to avenge the wrong done to the daughter of their chieftain. During one of those brief truces, which occasionally caused a temporary cessation of hostilities, Dermot had taken as his wife, Mor, the only daughter of Maurice. Some time afterwards he abducted the wife of O'Rourke, one of the lesser kings, and carried her off to his stronghold at Ferns. Mor, whom he then repudiated, withdrew to Dublin, taking up her abode at Saint Mary ot Hoggis, near her brother, Laurence.

The men of Imaile, realising the deadly blow which had been given to Dermot's influence, seized the opportunity for the redress of their grievances. They had never ceased to regard Benignus as an intruder, to be. driven from the monastery at the first possible moment. Free at last to exercise their right of election, clergy and people united in giving their suffrage to Laurence's nephew. All things combined to recommend him to their choice. The few years spent under Dermot's protégé had caused them to regret the beneficent rule of Laurence. Thomas was Laurence's most faithful disciple, and they had seen him trained to monastic life under the Saint's firm direction. He belonged to the neighbouring clan of the O'Tooles, and in such troublous times the support of this sept was

not to be despised. To see the monastery of Glendalough ruled by one whom he had trained, and whom he still would continue to direct, was a joy to Saint Laurence. He had never ceased to love that solitude to which it was his delight to return; to it he was wont to retire during the holy season of Lent, and there, withdrawn from the world, once more engage in those practices of solitary prayer and penance of which he had learned the habit during the last years of his religious training.

On a spur of the cliff which overhangs the Upper Lake there is a cave said to have been excavated in the rock by Saint Kevin. To reach this cave or recess the Lake must be crossed, after which the visitor ascends to the rock by means of rough steps cut in the face of the cliff. Here, in this lonely spot, cut off from all intercourse with the world, the Saint, every year, spent several weeks during Lent. No one approached his retreat save his nephew, the Abbot, who took to him the scant nourishment which he allowed himself, and the reports from his diocese, carrying away the Archbishop's replies and the directions to be transmitted to Dublin. If any serious matter called for his presence, Laurence left his retreat and returned for a short time to the city.

Chapter 6 - The Invasion - Siege and Fall of Dublin (1170-1171)

Cosmopolitan Population of Dublin - The Archbishop's Foresight - Dermot's Enemies in league against Him - He asks help from the King of England - Dermot at Bristol - He treats with Norman Adventurers - His return to Ferns - He is joined by the first band of Norman Warriors - Ireland in Arms against Him, imposes Conditions of Peace - Arrival of Richard Strongbow - He Marries Dermot's Daughter - Marches on Dublin - Laurence in the Enemies' Camp - The City Taken and Pillaged - Attitude taken by Laurence - He spends the Winter Organising Resistance - The Irish Army before the Walls of Dublin - Precarious Position of the Anglo-Normans - A Bold Sortie creates Panic in the Irish Camp and Disperses the Besiegers - Tardy Arrival of Hasculf - He is taken Prisoner and Beheaded

To Laurence, solicitous for the temporal, as well as the spiritual, welfare of his people, the future seemed very ominous. Whilst, owing to the continual quarrelling of the chieftains amongst themselves, Ireland's strength was becoming exhausted by intestine strife, on the other side of the Channel a great kingdom was being formed. The English King, alert, enterprising, and astute, not content with the fair French provinces which were his, was watching an opportunity to descend upon Ireland. More than once the Archbishop had warned his people of this, but his prophetic words were unheeded. And now, inspired by hereditary hatred of Dermot's family, the Danes were joining the league formed to crush the King of Leinster.

Soon the people were forced to recognise how farseeing had been the Archbishop. Scarcely had the Anglo-Normans, Dermot's new allies, set foot on Irish soil, than to satisfy his old animosity, he led them to the walls of Dublin.

To those less perspicacious than Saint Laurence, this seemed but the beginning of one of those frequent quarrels which on the smallest pretext broke out among the petty kings of Ireland. At a time already distant (1152), whilst O'Rourke, the King of Breffni, was

absent on some foray, his wife, Devorgilla, had been carried off by Dermot, the King of Leinster, to his stronghold at Ferns. The following year, aided by Gordelvach O'Connor, King of all Ireland, O'Rourke invaded Dermot's kingdom, defeating him in an engagement. A few years later, another was elected in the place of Gordelvach, to fill the office of Ard-Righ, or supreme King of Ireland. The newly-elected monarch took sides with Dermot, and joined him in ravaging O'Rourke's small principality. In 1161 Gordelvach O'Connor's son, Roderick, was elected Ard-Righ, and he, in turn, espoused O'Rourke's cause, being joined by the King of Meath and the chieftains of some of the clans in the east.

Formidable as was this confederation of kings, each with some insult or some defeat to avenge, yet the King of Leinster need not have feared it, if only he could have relied upon the fidelity of the tribes subject to his authority. But the ill-treatment received from him during the course of his already long reign had exasperated these tribes. Seeing their ruler in such a critical position, driven to bay by his adversaries, they, too, were filled with the desire to avenge their wrongs, and so made common cause with the enemy.

Dermot's resistance was but short-lived. Without allies, and having but a small army at his command, he could not long hold out against the combined forces of his enemies. He fled, and going on board a vessel, crossed over to England. But, although vanquished and a fugitive, he did not give up the struggle. He quitted Ireland, his heart bursting with hatred, his mind filled with schemes of vengeance. The assistance refused him by his vassals he would seek from the King of England.

Henry II had been for some time absent in France. Having celebrated the festival of Christmas at Poitiers, he went to Rouen about the beginning of Lent.1 Here it was that his meeting with Dermot took place. Having set before him the extremities to which he was reduced ‘by the coalition of his enemies, the King of Leinster declared himself the vassal of the English King, took the oath of fealty, and rendered him homage. In return, he received the following letter, addressed to all the subjects of the King of England: "Know ye that we have received to our favour Dermot, Prince of Leinster. Whosoever of our subjects shall render him

assistance in regaining his principality, shall have our favour and consent."

On his return to England, Dermot remained for some time at Bristol, where he was within easy reach of Ireland. During his stay there, he caused Henry's letter to be published repeatedly; he also took counsel with the military men who frequented that port. England did not lack military adventurers, idle and penniless, who asked nothing better than to seize the possessions of others and to deal again for fortune with the point of their sword. Amongst these was Richard Strongbow, who lent a willing ear to Dermot's proposals.

Strongbow's ancestors, sprung from a branch of the family of the Counts of Eu, had settled in England after the Conquest, and with the aid of a small body of troops, natives of Brabant, England, and Normandy, had become masters of Pembrokeshire on the borders of Wales. One of them, a skilful archer, was nick-named by his comrades, Strongbow, and the name thus bestowed became hereditary in the family.

Prodigal of his wealth and fond of splendour, Richard, Earl of Pembroke, had ruined himself by his lavish expenditure, his vast estates proving insufficient to satisfy his creditors; an expedition to Ireland, whilst taking him out of reach of their pursuit, would doubtless afford him also an opportunity of retrieving his fortunes. Thus, the agreement was concluded. In the following spring, Strongbow would cross to Ireland and assist Dermot to regain his kingdom. On his part, Dermot promised to give him his eldest daughter in marriage, with right of succession to the kingship of Leinster.

Whilst at Bristol, the fugitive King met with other adventurers, of Norman origin also, who had little save their sword and their bravery to offer in his service; of the number were Robert FitzStephen, who had only just been released from prison, and was eager to seek his fortune in a strange land; his kinsman, Maurice FitzGerald; Hervé Fitzmaurice, Strongbow's uncle, and even more penniless than himself. To these Dermot promised that he would deliver into their hands Wexford, which was the nearest port to Bristol, and two neighbouring tracts of land. Like Richard, on their part, they promised to go to his aid in the following spring.

These negotiations occupied several months. Summer was already far advanced. Dermot could endure exile no longer. Returning secretly to Ireland, he reached Ferns, where the priest of the place accorded him a friendly reception. Here he remained throughout the winter. The spring of 1168 found Strongbow unprepared. Without funds as he was, he had yet to form a small army, to collect and equip men-at-arms; this done, it still remained to obtain permission from Henry II, without which he could undertake nothing.

Meanwhile, Robert, Maurice, and Hervé had fulfilled their promise. In the beginning of summer they chartered three vessels, crossed to Ireland, and landed at Baginbun Head, in Bannow Bay, south coast of Wexford, . where they were joined by Dermot with a small band of his adherents. Combining their forces, they then marched on Wexford. Alert, resolute, fertile in expedients, these Anglo-Normans, in their coats of mail, worn over splendid armour, and mounted on great chargers, also cased in steel, soon manifested their superiority. At sight of them, the inhabitants of Wexford, who had gone out to meet their assailants, seized with panic, took refuge behind their walls. After one day's siege, the town surrendered. Faithful to his promise, Dermot bestowed it with its environs upon Maurice. To Hervé he gave the land lying along the coast between Wexford and Waterford.

The news of the fall of Wexford and its occupation by the Anglo-Norman troops created profound sensation throughout Ireland. Everywhere men cursed the traitor who had brought these strangers to their land, and all realised the urgent necessity of compelling him to break with them. A national assembly was convened at Athboy by Roderick O'Connor to which came the leaders of the nation, both lay and spiritual, amongst the latter the Archbishops of Armagh, Dublin, and Tuam. At this assembly, Roderick was confirmed in his supreme sovereignty over all Ireland, and it was resolved to raise an army to drive the foreigner from their shores and to crush the traitor.

The united forces of the nation assembled in Hy-Kinshela, in Leinster. The few natives who, in the beginning, had rallied round Dermot, now abandoned him. His Anglo-Norman allies who

numbered but four or five hundred were too few to offer resistance to the whole of Ireland in arms. Nothing remained but to take refuge in a dense wood near Ferns, and there entrenched in a strongly-fortified camp await the coming of the enemy. In such circumstances, Dermot found himself driven to treat with Roderick, who, certainly, seems to have dealt with him very leniently, judging by the conditions he imposed. Dermot was to send away his dangerous allies, and this done, his kingdom of Leinster should be restored to him; meanwhile, he should give up his son as hostage for his fidelity.

But this peace, which was concluded in the course of the year 1169, was destined to be but of short duration. Dermot had no intention of fulfilling the required conditions. It may well be questioned if he had the power to fulfil them. His new allies, now established in Wexford and along the coast, were quite determined to remain. Robert FitzStephen was building himself a castle on a rock near Wexford. Rather than give it up, he was prepared to desert the King of Leinster. Already these strangers were levying contributions on the surrounding country, and were extending their reconnoitering as far as the very walls of Dublin. It was very much to be doubted whether Dermot could any longer rely on the loyalty of his tribes. Besides, encouraged by the money received from the Normans, he may have been devising schemes which, whilst gratifying his desire for revenge, would, at the same time, extend his power far beyond the confines of Leinster.

He spent the winter in efforts to increase the number of his auxiliaries, and also sent messages to the Earl of Pembroke, urging upon him the fulfilment of his engagements. "The swallows have come and gone," wrote Dermot to his dilatory ally, "but no wind has blown you hither. I have regained Leinster. If you come in time with a strong force, we shall be able to unite to it the other kingdoms."

Impressed by the rapid success of his compatriots, Strongbow hesitated no longer. Approaching Henry, he begged permission to try his fortune in a foreign land. The King, apparently, gave his consent. But his ironical, equivocal answer permitted of his revoking the permission if so appeared good to him.

On the 23rd August, 1170, Richard Strongbow, with 1,200 men, landed near Waterford. Hastening to the assistance of his allies, Dermot was already on the spot to receive him. Marching on Waterford they took the city, and there the marriage of Dermot's daughter, Eva, to Strongbow, was celebrated. Then, without delay, the allied forces set out for Dublin. This movement had been anticipated. All the roads leading to Dublin were lined by the Irish forces who held every position of advantage, being posted especially in wood and thicket. The superior tactics of the enemy, however, rendered these measures of no avail. Advancing along the coast, they crossed the wooded mountains of Wicklow, passed through Glendalough, and arrived under the walls of Dublin without drawing sword, to the consternation. of the inhabitants, unprepared for their coming. Great was the panic in the city when Dermot and his allies were seen pitching their tents around the ramparts. Thrown into disorder, the inhabitants, instead of preparing to defend their city, thought rather of seeking safety in flight. In the general confusion, the Archbishop, alone, took steps to avert the threatened danger, and, at once, sought the enemy's camp. Strongbow, having married his niece, Eva, Saint Laurence might reasonably expect a favourable hearing, and it may well be that he hoped to induce both Dermot and Strongbow to treat his people with clemency, that thus the surrender of the city might be effected without bloodshed. But Strongbow's lieutenants, impatient for the opportunity to pillage, whilst the leaders were engaged in negotiations with the Archbishop, rushed the assault, and succeeded in scaling the ramparts. Dispersing through the city, they ruthlessly slaughtered the inhabitants, The wealthiest of the citizens, led by King Hasculf, had already gone on board some ships in the river, taking with them everything of value which, in their hurried flight, they could collect; they even tried, it is said, to carry away the famous Cross of Dublin, but it remained so immovably fixed in the ground that no human force would have availed for its removal.

Returning in all haste to the city, Laurence had the grief of seeing his people massacred before his eyes. Wholly regardless of the soldiers' threats and brutality, he fearlessly tried to defend their lives and to save their property. When the slaughter ceased, he went through the streets, ministering to the dying, and seeing that the dead received Christian burial.

The Archbishop, equally with all the other members of the O'Toole family, was the object of Dermot's fierce hatred; consequently, not alone his patrimonial possessions, but also the property of his church were first devastated and then confiscated. But, undeterred, he continued to champion bravely the rights of his clergy. In the conqueror's train were grasping clerics ready to fill the places of the vanquished. To these Laurence offered determined resistance. He obtained, not without great difficulty, as may be imagined, permission for his own clergy to retain their benefices. He also succeeded in obtaining the restitution of all the books and sacred vessels stolen from the churches.

There was one other enemy upon whom Dermot longed to be revenged: O'Rourke, King of Breffni, who had urged the Irish princes to league together against him. Scarcely had Dublin been taken when he induced Strongbow to accompany him on an expedition into the neighbouring kingdom of Meath, which they laid desolate. After this exploit, Dermot retired to his stronghold at Ferns where he spent the winter, and where he died in the following spring, loaded with the maledictions of all Ireland. But, in any case, his role was played out. Masters of all the towns along the coast facing England, the invaders could very well do without him, and henceforth would require no assistance in fighting for their own interests. Their rapid success in the beginning had inspired them with confidence for the future.

The seizure of Dublin had been effected so quickly that the Irish army, becoming demoralised, disbanded without any attempt having been made to discuss the situation or to come to some determination. But the Irish had by no means resigned themselves to defeat. They spent the winter in active preparations to retake Dublin and to drive the strangers out of the country.

The Bishops regarded this invasion as a divine punishment on the people for not having set free, according to the resolution passed at Armagh in 1158, all the English held in bondage, numbers of whom, since then, had been sold to pirates. It was now decided, at a national council held in the same city, that all those English still remaining in slavery should be at once set free.

Laurence, more than all others, contributed to the skilful

organisation of the forces preparing to resist the enemy. Not yet would he despair of his country regaining her independence. But, at the same time, he had seen these strangers at close quarters, and he could not but be struck by their bravery, the determination of their attack, and the admirable understanding existing between them by means of which, whilst all acted together in perfect harmony in obedience to the orders of one supreme commander, yet, at the same time, when there was question of profiting by some opportunity afforded by the enemy, they found themselves individually free to assume the initiative. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, if such soldiers were superior to the Irish troops, badly armed, badly disciplined, exhausting all their enthusiasm in the first wild onslaught, and unable, even in the presence of the enemy, to restrain their inclination to dis- - agree. Nevertheless, the Archbishop devoted all his efforts to organising resistance. He visited the princes, he, everywhere, preached the necessity for harmony, pointing to that small band of adventurers settled in his own city of Dublin, ever on the alert for opportunities to pillage and ready to spread themselves throughout the whole island. His words took effect. The princes united their forces, and in the beginning of spring a large army was to march on Dublin.1 The Danish chief, Hasculf, to whom they appealed, promised to bring to their assistance a fleet of Norwegian vessels with which to close the entrance to the river, and thus cut off all communication between the besieged and England.

But, unknown to the Irish, by the King of England's order all such communication had already ceased. Although replying to Earl Pembroke's request with apparent irony, in reality Henry was not uninterested in the issue of the undertaking. Quite the reverse. From France, he followed attentively the vicissitudes of this struggle, quite determined to interfere when he judged the opportune moment had come. Quite unconsciously Strongbow was carrying out a project conceived by the King long before Dermot had appealed to the latter. Soon after his accession, in the beginning of 1155, Henry had obtained from Pope Adrian IV, an Englishman, and only just elected Pontiff, a Bull investing him with the sovereignty of all Ireland, and he only awaited a favourable opportunity to proclaim his investiture. And now the opportunity presented itself for him to add Ireland to his dominions, without the

loss of one man or even of a crown-piece. Thus it was that he permitted the adventurers to carry out their undertaking boldly, quite prepared, in the event of their being forced by defeat to return to England, to disown them. But when he saw the favourable turn which their fortunes had taken in Ireland, he interfered with cruel suddenness, asserting his royal rights over the whole of the conquered territory, and enjoining upon the conquerors, as well as the conquered, submission to his supreme authority. Before the close of the year 1170, Henry, who was then in Aquitaine, caused to be proclaimed throughout his kingdom, an edict forbidding his subjects to export anything whatsoever to Ireland, and enjoining upon those amongst them who happened to be in that country to quit it before the approaching Easter, under penalty of confiscation of their property, and of being condemned to exile. Strongbow hastened to send as his envoy to Henry, one of his companions named Raymond. "It was with your authority," he was to say to the King, "that the Earl of Pembroke went to Ireland to assist your loyal subject, Dermot. He places all the possession that he has acquired under your supreme authority." Henry intended to exact far more. Continually putting off his reply, he kept Raymond all the winter following the Court in its movements from place to place. When, at last, in the spring, Raymond returned to Dublin he was not in a position to give his companions any information regarding the King's intentions. He found the city invested by an army estimated as numbering sixty thousand men.1 In response to the appeal of the Archbishop, nearly all the tribes of Leinster and of the east had joined its ranks. Hasculf, upon whom the Irish relied for the closing of the port; delaying to come, the King of Ireland and the Archbishop appealed for assistance to the King of the Isle of Man, who responded by hastening to Dublin with thirty vessels. The Anglo-Normans now found themselves hemmed in on all sides, with only their own small force to oppose this armed multitude. The situation may be summed up thus: on one side, the besieged afraid, on account of the fewness of their numbers, to risk giving battle; on the other, the besiegers, rendered cautious by their recent defeats, preferring to reduce the enemy by famine.

Two months passed away in this manner - the besieged seeing their stock of provisions each day diminishing; the besiegers, wrapped in false security, awaiting from day to day the surrender of the city.

At last the Anglo-Normans took counsel together. "We have none," they said amongst themselves, "upon whom we can rely, save ourselves. The English are as hostile to us as are the Irish. Far better for us to die, sword in hand, than to perish here of famine." They decided, therefore, to make a sudden sally upon the besiegers, and at the very beginning to single out for attack the commander-in-chief, Roderick O'Connor.

Next morning they divided their small force into three bodies, and, rushing upon the Irish, struck right and left, spreading terror and confusion all around them. Just at that moment Roderick was in his bath. The suddenness of the attack caused him to lose presence of mind, and he could neither regain self-control nor rally his troops, already in flight. The Irish army was completely routed. Until night, the Anglo-Normans, sword in hand, pursued the fugitives. When they desisted from their pursuit and retraced their steps, they found in the camp of the enemy enough provisions to last them for a year.

Shortly afterwards Hasculf appeared before Dublin, with sixty ships and a small band of Norwegians. As soon as they had landed they marched towards Dublin. On the road they encountered the Irish forces in full flight, pursued by the victors; uncertain as to the issue of the conflict they fled to their ships, but were followed by the Normans and slaughtered in great numbers. Hasculf, as he was stepping on board, was seized and taken to Dublin, where he was beheaded in the market-place.

Chapter 7 - Henry II in Dublin - The Synod of Cashel (18 October 1171 to 17 April 1172)

Henry, Fleeing from Excommunication, crosses to Ireland - In the South; in Dublin - Irish Kings and Bishops at the Christmas Festivities - Synod held at Cashel. - Designs of Henry - He is recalled to England

There were several motives urging Henry to visit Ireland. He was in a hurry to take possession of the territory conquered by his subjects and to dispose of it as he willed. Threatened with excommunication, he seized the opportunity to absent himself for some time from his kingdom.

During December of the previous year an event had occurred of such gravity that all Europe rang with the news of it. A reconciliation had taken place between Henry and his former Chancellor, Thomas a Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury. But the hatred of the King for his one-time friend was by no means extinguished; in the depths of his heart its fires still smouldered, and some of his courtiers, perceiving this, devoted themselves to fanning the flame. One day, in a fit of fury, he cried out: "Cowards! of all those who feed at my table, is there no one to avenge my outraged honour and rid me of this insolent priest?" Four knights, hearing these words, construed them into a command. They set out for Canterbury and forcing their way into the Cathedral murdered the Archbishop at the foot of the altar (29th December, 1170).

Throughout the length and breadth of Europe the news of this sacrilegious crime was received with horror. There was but one being on earth who could call the King of England to account for what had happened, and all turned to the Pope, in the expectation of hearing him pronounce against Henry sentence of excommunication. At sight of the punishment with which he was threatened, Henry fled. A sojourn in Ireland would, for a time, withdraw him from the observation of Christian Europe.

Strongbow, having accepted the King's hard conditions, was

allowed to retain his place in the royal suite. But, notwithstanding, during the voyage Henry maintained towards him and his companions an attitude of sullen suspicion, and held aloof from them. No doubt, to be indebted to such humble subjects for the territory of which he was about to take possession was galling to the King's pride. The reflection that he was going to make his appearance in Ireland at the head of a small army soothed this wounded pride. Before setting foot on the conquered territory, he would make himself master of the whole southern portion of the country and receive the submission of the chief cities, Cork, Limerick, and Cashel. He landed in Ireland on the 18th October, and on the Feast of Saint Martin, November 11th, he made his entrance into Dublin, where he proposed to spend the winter.

A palace of polished wood, decorated according to Irish fashion, was built for him outside the city walls. Here he kept his court and celebrated the festival of Christmas with customary solemnity, displaying to the princes who came to swear fealty to him all the splendour of English royalty. To his court came the O'Phelans, the Macdalwis, from Leinster; the O'Tooles from the neighbourhood of Dublin; the Mac Gillamocholmog, the O'Caseys, and O'Rourkes from Meath. The Ard-Righ, Roderick O'Connor, was conspicuous by his absence. Henry sent to him two of his trusty knights, Hugh de Lacy and William FitzAldelin, charged to place before him the conditions of peace.

The Bishops of those parts of the country which had submitted also journeyed to Dublin. It was on their influence that the King relied to secure the recognition of his sovereignty. He overwhelmed them with attentions and discussed with them the evils afflicting the Church in Ireland which henceforth was to be on the same footing as the Church in England. These evils were of too grave a nature, of too long standing, and the reforms attempted during the course of that century had met with too much obstinate resistance from the petty kings for the Bishops to hesitate in accepting the assistance of the King.

A Synod was convoked to be held early in the coming year at Cashel. To the Bishop of Lismore, who held the office of Papal Legate, was given the charge of laying before the Synod the list of

abuses to be suppressed. At this Synod there was present a great number of the clergy. It consisted, together with the Archbishops of Cashel, Dublin, and Tuam, of the Bishops, their Suffragans, the Archdeacons, Deans, Abbots, and Priors. The King was represented by the Abbot of Builde was, the Archdeacon of Llandaff, and his clergy.

The decrees of the Synod have been preserved to us. First of all, it was enacted that the ancient tribal arrangement which had contributed so much to enslave the Church and to hamper her action and which had destroyed all rights of ownership by converting private possessions into common property, should be done away with. From that time forth every man, on his death-bed, in the presence of his confessor, should dictate his will, dividing his property in equal shares amongst his wife, his children, and his relatives.

The tithes paid by the people were to be spent in the maintenance of the clergy. By reason of their sacred character, in the event of any of their lay relatives being guilty of homicide, all priests were exempt from the law requiring compensation to be made to the murdered man's family.

Church property was to be exempt from all exaction on the part of seculars. Neither kings nor princes were any longer to have the right to demand food and lodging for themselves and their families. And the nobles were likewise deprived of the right which they arrogated to themselves, of being supplied four times a year with provisions from the neighbouring Church lands.

Children having first been catechised at the church door, were to be baptised at the fonts. Men who had married within the forbidden degree of kindred must put away their wives, and in all that regarded the marriage tie must carefully observe the laws of the Church. All who died in the friendship of God were entitled to the prayers and funeral rites of the Church.

In the recital of the Divine Office the dioceses of Ireland, similarly to those of England, would follow the usages of the Church in Rome.

His great age and infirmities prevented the Primate of Armagh from attending the Synod, but he repaired to Dublin, and publicly declared his complete concurrence in all that had been decreed.

We have seen that Saint Laurence was present at the Synod of Cashel. It would be of interest to know what were his relations with the King of England during the latter's sojourn in Dublin. From what we read of his intercourse afterwards with Henry, we are led to think that, from the time of their first meeting, the King always accorded him a favourable reception.

The Saint had abandoned all thought of resistance. For him Ireland's independence was a dream of the past. No doubt, the petty kings would league together again in an effort to stay the onward march of the invaders, and then a kind of guerilla warfare might be carried on. But never would Ireland succeed in freeing herself from the yoke of the stranger. On his part, Henry, skilled diplomatist as he was, well understood the importance, for his authority so long contested, of having on his side a personage of such exalted virtue as Laurence.

Henry intended to spend the opening months of the year 1172 in arranging for the permanence of his rule over the recently conquered territory. To guard against all danger of an eruption on the part of the Irish forces in the future, he considered that it would be necessary to construct a chain of fortresses. Circumstances prevented him carrying out his plan. The winter tempests had put a stop to all communication with England. Impatient of news, towards the middle of Lent, Henry went down to Wexford. Shortly afterwards ships from England and Aquitaine were seen approaching the land. For two reasons, the new-comers urged Henry to return to his kingdom. The Cardinals sent by the Pope to inquire into the murder of Saint Thomas a Becket had reached Normandy, and were threatening - to place all the countries which had submitted to the English King under an interdict. On Easter Sunday (April 17), Henry embarked for England.

Chapter 8 - The Conquerors and the Conquered (1171-1179)

The First Days of English Rule - The Security of the Country - Laurence Attacked by Robbers - Famine and Misery - Laurence's Charity - The Conquerors Re-build the Cathedral - Laurence Works Miracles - Laurence at Windsor - At the Tomb of Saint Thomas a Becket - Struck by Madman - In Wales - Strongbow's Death and Burial

War is ever attended by ruin and desolation. But when the conquered refuse to accept defeat, to yield submission to the conquerors, then, indeed, the evils of warfare are prolonged, and the suffering of the vanquished people grow greater the longer the struggle is continued.

In 1172 Dublin once more beheld an Irish army encamped under its walls. Henry, at his departure, had entrusted the government of the country to Hugh de Lacy. The following year saw the King in Normandy struggling with serious difficulties. In urgent need of men, he recalled from Ireland Hugh de Lacy and the picked troops left under his command. To Strongbow he committed the defence of the country, associating with him Raymond as second in command.

No sooner had the English army been recalled than the Irish once more rose in rebellion. Having retaken Meath, Roderick O'Connor laid siege to Dublin. Summoned to Strongbow's assistance, Raymond hurriedly sailed from England with fifteen vessels, and at once, on landing, marched to Dublin. Roderick, not venturing to give him battle, withdrew his army.

But no reverses could tame the spirit of the Irish} never would they submit patiently to see the soil of their native land trodden by the stranger. If it were no longer possible to fight openly against the enemy, then would they lie in ambush amongst the thickets, and attack him as he passed unsuspecting. Unsubdued and rebellious, they preferred to turn brigands and live by plunder, cherishing as they did the same hostile feelings towards those who submitted to the strangers as they did towards these latter themselves. The east of Ireland had been conquered, but it was far from being subdued.

Of this Laurence was afforded ample proof on one occasion, whilst travelling across Leinster, on his way to Wexford. The roads, as was well known, were unsafe. A few persons, amongst them an English soldier, and a scribe with his wife and son, asked to be allowed to join Laurence and his clergy on the journey. As they were passing the entrance to a wood, twenty-four men suddenly appeared from amongst the undergrowth where they had lain concealed. "Deliver up to us the king's soldier," they said, addressing the Archbishop, "and you and your clergy shall be free to continue your journey." Laurence refused, and the highwaymen, becoming furious, attacked the party, killing the scribe. They brandished their pikes and were about to run the soldier through, when Laurence, turning his horse, dashed right between them. His horse, pierced with pike-thrusts, fell, but the soldier, profiting by the momentary diversion, made good his escape. Enraged, the bandits next attacked the Archbishop and the priests, heaping upon them every possible indignity. At last, despoiled of everything, the travellers were allowed to proceed. When he reached the neighbouring town Laurence summoned his assailants to appear before him and to sue for pardon, threatening them with excommunication if they refused. Two of the number obeyed and accepted the penance imposed upon them. The rest of the band refused to submit, and the Archbishop, accordingly, declared them excommunicated. The outlaws received their sentence with derision, carrying their impiety so far as to parody the formula of excommunication. "Let us," they jeered, "in our turn, excommunicate the Archbishop." And then, wrapping themselves in the hides of stolen oxen, in mockery of the sacred vestments, with burning branches in their hands instead of tapers, they marched to the river in which, with loud yells and cursing the priests, they extinguished the flaming torches.

Such impious deeds never go unpunished. Most of the blasphemers died shortly afterwards.

The conquerors, always ready to press heavily on the vanquished, treated the people no better. When the soldiers did not receive their pay, as most often happened, they levied it themselves from the inhabitants. After a few years of such government one can easily imagine the state of misery to which the country was reduced. In Dublin, it is true, the mercantile community had resumed relations

with the outside world, but, at the same time, there were crowds in the city wholly destitute, whilst in the surrounding districts the misery was even still greater.

Saint Laurence, deeply grieved by his people's distress, devoted to their relief everything at his disposal. For three years he supported five hundred poor persons in the city, and about three hundred more in the different parts of his diocese, causing to be distributed amongst them food, clothing, everything necessary for existence. Numbers of women, unable to feed their children, left them at the door of the Archbishop's dwelling, or in those places through which he should pass. Thus it was that whilst the distress lasted he had upwards of two hundred children to provide for. He committed them to the care of the officials of his household and of his stewards, charging them to provide for their maintenance. He also sought to interest on their behalf the more affluent among his people. In order to make room for others, as the children grew up, each one, by his directions, received a small wooden cross, and furnished with this as a recommendation from their Archbishop, they were sent forth to solicit, throughout the diocese, help from the charitable. The veneration in which the Saint was held procured for these children substantial aid from some, from others assistance and advice in gaining a livelihood for themselves.

Whilst the saintly Archbishop seemed to be wholly absorbed in these weighty cares, at the same time, aided by the strangers lately settled in the city, he was providing for the spiritual wants of the inhabitants by the erection of churches. Thanks to the lavish generosity of Strongbow and of his seneschal, Raymond, who was also his brother-in-law, the rebuilding of the Cathedral was begun. The lives of the knights of those days, men of rude and violent manners as they were, often present to us the most striking contrasts. We see them fired with the lust of battle and intoxicated with victory, greedy for pillage, plundering churches and carrying off reliquaries and other sacred objects; and then again we behold these same men, when once inspired by the sentiment of religion, devout to the Saints, venerating their relics, generous to their shrines. Strongbow, on his first coming to Ireland, had plundered those most venerated of sanctuaries, Glendalough and Kildare.1 And now, ever magnificent in his gifts, he endowed them in

perpetuity. He also founded the Priory of Kilmainham, gave donations to the Priory of All Saints, and the Abbeys of Saint Mary and Glendalough. Through his exertions and the liberality of his family the Archbishop was enabled to undertake the building of a stone cathedral in the Romanesque style of architecture, then universally admired.

At that period a church built entirely of stone must have been a great novelty in Ireland. Up to the time of Saint Malachi almost all Irish churches were small buildings without any pretensions to beauty. When, on his return from Rome, Malachi, charmed with the order and beauty of the Romanesque churches which he had seen in France, would fain have introduced this new style of building into Ireland, he met with nothing but incredulity and raillery. "We are Irish, not French," said the people. "What folly, this is! Where are you going to get the money for such a work?"

The conquerors took no heed of these prejudices. Accustomed to see the Offices of the Church carried out in the great Norman and English cathedrals, they had nothing but contempt for the poor, insecure churches in Ireland. They wished to erect in the new metropolis an edifice of vast and harmonious proportions, which would last to all time. Beginning, as was usual, with the apse, the new church consisted of a choir with chapels radiating as from a centre, and a transept, with a central tower. Saint Laurence was not destined to complete the work, the nave being added by one of his successors, Archbishop Luke.

The cathedral was dedicated to the Holy Trinity. The Archbishop, in his turn, now desired to erect a church in honour of the Blessed Virgin. The Canon of Eu, relating a miracle worked by the Saint, shows him to us appealing to the rich merchants of the city for funds to carry out his intention. They had embarked with him on a vessel sailing for England with a very valuable cargo. Suddenly there arose a violent storm. The sea, lashed into fury, threatened every moment to engulf the vessel. The terrified passengers gathered round the Archbishop, calling him their father, their protector, and imploring him to intercede with God for their deliverance from the danger which threatened them. Calm and unmoved, even when the tempest was at its height, the Saint

replied: "Do not fear. None of you shall perish. Take my advice, and by your pious offerings propitiate Heaven. We are building a church in Dublin, as you know, in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mother of God. Devote to its completion part of the wealth which He has given you. The tempest is going to abate. Neither you nor your property shall be lost." Instantly all laid their generous offerings at the feet of the Archbishop. The angry waves subsided, calm fell over the sea, and the passengers united in fervent gratitude to God, Who, at the prayer of His minister, had delivered them from deadly peril.

This was not the only occasion upon which Saint Laurence's intercession was invoked during storm. On a previous voyage to England the ship in which the Archbishop had taken passage sailed from Dublin in the company of three other vessels. Midway across a hurricane burst upon them. The sailors, unable to steer the ships owing to the terrific seas which swept the decks, seeing themselves in momentary danger of shipwreck, resigned themselves to death. But one of them, filled with confidence, turned to the Archbishop, exclaiming, "My Lord, we are lost! save us by your holy prayers." The Saint kneeling down, prayed with uplifted hands that God, in His mercy, might deliver them from their imminent danger. Scarcely was his prayer ended when the storm ceased, the angry waves became calm.

Henceforth wherever Laurence went the fame of his sanctity preceded him. That he was a saint had long been the belief of the people, and they were strengthened in their conviction by those priests whose position in the Archbishop's household brought them into daily intercourse with him. Could they not testify to the power of his intercession manifested before them on many occasions? They told how, whilst yet Abbot of Glendalough, Laurence, by laying his hands upon the sick had cured them, and on other occasions had forced perjurers to reveal the truth. Once these priests had seen the Archbishop's steward brought to him so seriously ill that the physicians declared his case hopeless. He was suffering from dropsy, and was swollen almost beyond recognition. The Saint imposed hands on him, praying for him as he did so; then, turning to those around, he said: "Take him home. When he is well he will resume his work." That night he grew better, and in a

week he presented himself, perfectly cured, before the Archbishop to express his gratitude.

On another occasion the parish priest of Saint Martin was stricken suddenly with some strange malady; for three days he remained unconscious and to all appearance lifeless. Those around him, convinced that he was dead, were already making preparations for his burial when the Archbishop arrived. The Saint had particular love for this priest to whom he had afforded the means of studying for the priesthood, placing him on the Cathedral staff after his ordination, and later, appointing him to the care of a parish in Dublin. Deeply moved at beholding his friend's condition the Archbishop shed tears, and addressing the apparently inanimate form, he said: "Ah! thou, too, no doubt wouldst have wished to speak with me before leaving this world. But God's will be done." Then kneeling, he prayed silently. All at once, as if awakening from a deep sleep, the priest sat up, seemingly astonished to see so many people around his bed. Then he spoke: "God is my witness," he said, "that my soul had already left my body, and the bad angels were contending with the good for its possession, when I perceived my Lord Archbishop Laurence kneeling and humbly praying for me to God and His glorious Virgin Mother. His prayer has touched the Lord, Who has commanded that my soul should re-enter the body."

The Saint, in his humility, would not allow him to continue, and he forbade him, under pain of excommunication, ever to speak of the matter again.

People believed that those who hindered the Saint in the exercise of his charity would surely incur the punishment of Heaven. It chanced that one of his household had merited the gallows. The wretched man was seized and dragged to the place of execution; he was already at the foot of the gibbet when the Archbishop was apprised of what had happened. Instantly he hurried to the scaffold, hoping to save the life of his servitor. But the executioner, seeing him coming and determined that the culprit should not escape, in all haste cut off his head. It may have been that the Archbishop, in his regret at having failed to save the unhappy man, reproached the executioner. Be this as it may, as he was returning to Dublin with some friends, the officer of justice fell on the bridge and broke his

thigh, dying of the injury shortly afterwards. The veneration in which the Archbishop was held led the people to regard this death as a Divine punishment.

The country, though conquered, was not subdued; seldom did peace prevail for any length of time, hostilities breaking out afresh on the smallest pretext. Ever anxious for his people's welfare, the Archbishop exerted all his influence to maintain peace between the Irish and English. For this purpose, on one occasion, he journeyed to the extreme end of his diocese, taking with him, in addition to his chaplain, his nephew, Thomas, Abbot of Glendalough, and two of his suffragans. At the entrance to a little village they dismounted for the purpose of chanting the Divine Office. One of the peasants, approaching Saint Laurence, said to him somewhat rudely: "My Lord, your presence here should not be made known by the number of your gentlemen-at-arms, but rather by your deeds of charity to the poor and the afflicted. There is, in the church here, a noble lady who is possessed by an unclean spirit; lately she has become mad. You must go to her and pray that the Lord may deign to cure her."

Laurence wished his nephew to go to the unhappy woman's assistance, but he refused, not daring to cross the threshold of the church, certain as he was of being received with a storm of abuse. In like manner the Bishop of Kildare declined to go, making the same excuse. He did not possess, he alleged, sufficient virtue for the driving out of demons. Urged by the Saint's entreaties the other Bishop, Clement, repaired to the church. He was tall of stature and bald. Scarcely had he entered within the sacred edifice, when the woman cried out: "What do you want with me, you ugly bald-pate?" at the same time flinging at him a stone. Trembling and humiliated, Clement returned to the Archbishop. "Since it must be so," said the Saint, "I shall go. I shall visit this woman possessed, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." On reaching the church he made the sign of the cross over the woman, and without paying the least attention to the abuse which she heaped upon him, he caused her to be bound, and then imposing hands on her made the sign of the cross on her breast, at the same time forcing her to swallow some holy water; he then knelt, and offered a brief but fervent prayer, after which he withdrew. Three days afterwards, on his return, he again passed through the village, where he was met

by the woman, perfectly healed. Kissing the Saint's feet and hands, she returned thanks to God in sending to her His servant, that through his intercession she might be delivered from the power of the evil spirit. In her humble gratitude she begged the Archbishop, with his suite, to pass the night at her house.

The fame of his sanctity had spread to the English Court, whither the Archbishop now found himself obliged to proceed on matters concerning his diocese.

As Archbishop in a city which, quite as much by the election of the conquerors as by the course of events, had been made the capital of the new kingdom, Laurence seemed better fitted than any other to treat with the King concerning the interests of the Church in Ireland. Henry received him with every mark of veneration and overwhelmed him with attention. He was aware of the attitude of conciliation adopted by the Archbishop in these later years, and was grateful to him. When, in October 1175, the envoys of the King of Connaught arrived at Windsor to treat of the conditions of peace, Henry expressed his desire that the Archbishop of Dublin should assist, together with the English Bishops and Barons, at the negotiations and that he should sign the treaty.

Raymond, Seneschal of Ireland, had just succeeded in forcing the King of Limerick to surrender. Frightened at the appearance on his frontiers of this officer, who, where there was a prospect of profitable pillage, thought little of violating those contracts to which his master had pledged himself, Roderick hastened to send as his deputies, together with his chancellor, the Archbishop of Tuam and the Abbot of Saint Brendan. Roderick did homage for his kingdom to Henry whom he acknowledged as his suzerain. He also engaged to cause an annual tribute to be paid by all his subjects; and as pledge of his fidelity would deliver such hostages as the King might demand. This treaty proved the correctness of Laurence's views with regard to the futility of resistance, and his conviction on this point became stronger than ever. Only four years had elapsed since the coming of the King of England, and now the Ard-Righ was compelled to acknowledge himself his liege-man. Above all things, the people must be spared the horrors of being forced into submission at the point of the sword.

On the occasion of one of his visits to England, Saint Laurence unexpectedly met the King at Canterbury. The fame of Saint Thomas a Becket as a martyr had spread rapidly, and people thronged from all parts to his tomb. Laurence joined in this universal veneration for him who had died a martyr's death in defending the liberties of the Church. Having assisted at the singing of the Night Office by the religious, he remained until the hour for his Mass in prayer before the tomb of the Saint. For a mind such as that of Laurence, naturally given to meditation, and accustomed to draw a moral from the events of life, what solemn lessons were preached from that silent tomb. In the stillness of the night a voice seemed to issue from it, proclaiming the martyr's greatness. He who lay there, glorious in death, had known the keenest of anguish, caused by his four years' struggle against his King, the friend of other days. Fearless defender of the Church, he had suffered exile and a persecution of which all connected with him were equally the victims. Scarcely had he returned to his diocese when he was stricken down on the very steps of the altar by the hand of the assassin. On the column near by was still to be seen the stain where his blood, mingled with his brains, had bespattered the marble. But that blood shed in her defence had won the victory for the Church. The King, the instigator of the murder, had been seen to kneel on that very spot, baring his shoulders to receive from the hands of the priests the lashes appointed as his penance for the crime. He had revoked the Constitutions of Clarendon and had humbly submitted to the Pope, acknowledging himself his vassal.

How long would this humble submission last? And what was it in reality? "A mere expedient to extricate him from a desperate position, a momentary yielding to weakness which would vanish with the passing of the storm."! Was he not already acting towards the Church in Ireland in precisely the same way as he had done in England? Quite recently, during the council held at Windsor, he had appointed to Waterford a Bishop whom Laurence, on his return, would be obliged to present for consecration to the Archbishop of Cashel. In his eyes the Bishops were merely his officials in the spiritual order. No communication with Rome was permitted them except under his supervision. Similarly, when the Papal Legates arrived in England they could not legally fulfil their mission until they had taken at the King's hands an oath binding them to do

nothing contrary to his pleasure while that mission lasted.

Very cleverly Henry availed himself of the opportunity afforded on the occasion of the reforms decreed in 1171 at the Synod of Cashel, to pose before the Pope as the restorer of ecclesiastical discipline in Ireland. The statement of the existing evils drawn up by the Bishop of Lismore for presentment to the Synod had been taken to Rome by the Archdeacon of Llandaff together with the letters from the King and the Bishops.

In his replies the Pope attributed to the King the whole merit of these reforms. In their turn, when they reached Ireland, the Papal Legates, tutored at the English Court, never ceased to preach to the Bishops and people the necessity of complete submission to the authority of the King. And now grieved at beholding the state of servitude to which the Church was reduced, and filled with anxiety for the future, Saint Laurence fervently implored the holy martyr to obtain for him light and strength in that day when he should be called upon to protect the Church against the encroachments of the Crown.

The religious had requested the Archbishop of Dublin to celebrate High Mass on the following morning, An enormous congregation already filled the church, when at the appointed hour Saint Laurence, robed in his pontifical vestments, advanced to the foot of the high altar. On his appearance many amongst the congregation remarked audibly that a saint was in their midst. At that moment a man stood up, crying out: "Then let us make a martyr of him"; and before any one could stop him, he rushed through the crowd brandishing a huge club with which he struck the Archbishop a violent blow on the head. Stunned, the Saint fell to the ground. For an instant the people seemed turned to stone, then recovering themselves they seized the madman, whilst the attendant clergy, horror-stricken, gathered round the prostrate form of the Archbishop, who lay unconscious on the altar steps. In a few moments Laurence, coming to himself, raised his head and asked for some water, which he blessed, and then requested that the wound on his head might be washed therewith; this was done, and immediately the blood ceased to flow. Seemingly none the worse of his injury the Archbishop then celebrated solemn High Mass; but to

the end of his life he retained the mark of the blow which he had received.

Cardinal de Bonnechose, who, in July, 1876, presided at the examination of the Saint's remains which took place in the Collegiate Church of Eu, states that there was visible "on the Saint's head a depression, which, according to the medical experts, must have been caused by the fracture of the skull resulting from the blow which he received in Canterbury Cathedral."

But for the intercession of Laurence the madman would have paid dearly for his terrible act. The King talked of putting him to death, but at the Saint's entreaty he was pardoned.

On one occasion when returning from a visit to the King, Saint Laurence was detained in Wales by contrary winds. Near where he was staying was the castle of a wealthy nobleman in which a chapel in honour of the Blessed Virgin had recently been erected. In one of the side walls of this chapel a cell had been built for a recluse who wished to take up his abode therein. The Bishop of the diocese being absent the chapel had not yet been consecrated. Meanwhile the hermit had taken possession of the cell.

One night, in a dream, he saw Our Lady. "Why do they delay," she asked, "to consecrate my chapel?" "Because," answered the hermit, "the Bishop has been absent for a long time." "It is not he," responded the Blessed Virgin, "who will consecrate it. The Archbishop of Dublin for whom I waited to perform this ceremony is here. Tell him that until he has done this, he will not have a favourable wind for his return to Ireland." Laurence, when approached by the owner of the castle, at first refused to consecrate the chapel, as to do so would be a breach of the canonical laws. But when the words of Our Lady were repeated to him he no longer hesitated, and he obeyed what he regarded as a command from Heaven by performing the consecration ceremony on the following day. That same evening the wind changed, and the Archbishop was enabled to embark for Ireland, where he landed safely after a pleasant voyage.

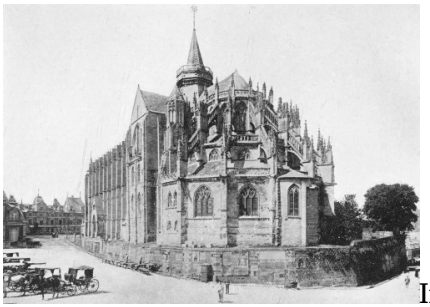
Some months later (May, 1176) the death occurred of Strongbow, his niece's husband, at that time Governor, of Dublin. His followers

for some time observed secrecy with regard to the Earl's death. The English forces, under Raymond's command, happened at the time to be absent on an expedition in South Munster. It was to be feared that when the Earl's death became known the people who hated him would give expression to their hatred by some violent outbreak. For to him they attributed, and with good reason, the loss of their national independence. It was Strongbow who, having made himself master of Dublin by his sudden and unexpected assault, had wholly put to rout the Irish forces assembled under the walls of the city and had stamped out every attempt at resistance. When at last the news did become known the people felt positive satisfaction in regarding this death as Heaven's just and speedy retribution for Strongbow's sacrilegious plundering of the shrines most deeply venerated.

Basilia, Strongbow's sister, announced the death to her husband, Raymond, in these enigmatical terms: "That big molar tooth from which I suffered so much has fallen out. If you care for me, or for yourself, return at once." On Raymond's return to Dublin the Earl's death was made known and his obsequies took place, at which the Archbishop presided. With the Saint's consent Strongbow was buried before the crucifix in the cathedral, the erection of which was due to his liberality. Ever filled with the spirit of peace Laurence would retain no memories save those of the princely generosity by which the Earl sought to make amends for the humiliations inflicted by the conquest.

Chapter 9 - Papal Legate in Ireland (1179-1180)

Lateran Council - Laurence is Sworn by the King - He Represents to the Pope the Evils which afflict the Church in Ireland - Laurence as Papal Legate - Defends the Church's Liberty and Punishes violation of Discipline



In the course of the summer of 1178 Pope Alexander III sent his Legates to all the Bishops of the Catholic world, summoning them to a council to be held at the beginning of the following Lent in the Church of the Lateran in Rome. Of the two Cardinals sent to England, one, Pierre de Saint-Agathe, had been appointed more particularly for Ireland, Scotland, and the Isles. Before continuing his journey Cardinal de Saint-Agathe, like his predecessors, was obliged to swear on the Gospels that whilst acting in his capacity of Legate he would countenance nothing prejudicial to the rights of the King or of the realm, and that he would visit the Court on his return journey.

Everyone was well aware of the rights arrogated by the King over all the dioceses in his kingdom, and his suspicious disposition was also well known. But few Bishops responded to the Papal summons; of the number being four from England and five or six from Ireland, including the Archbishops of Dublin and Tuam. The law did not permit of these leaving the kingdom without the King's permission, to obtain which they were obliged to take in his presence the same oath as had been imposed on the Cardinal Legate. Leaving Ireland shortly after Christmas they found the King at Winchester, where with his Court he had celebrated the festival.

Saint Laurence rejoiced to see the Hierarchy of Ireland taking part, for the first time, in an Ecumenical Council; intense, too, was his joy to find himself once more on the road to Rome, that road so often travelled in former days by his fellow-countrymen who ever venerated so deeply the tombs of the Apostles.

No doubt he also hoped that his visit to the Pope would have beneficial results for the Church in Ireland of which, up to that time, Alexander knew little or nothing beyond the accounts given to him by Henry's envoys or by the Legates who had received their instructions from the English Court. But the time was now at hand when he would be able to enlighten the Pope as to its actual condition.

The Council scarcely lasted one month; there were but three sessions, and on March 19th it came to a conclusion. Laurence prolonged his sojourn in the Eternal City for several weeks and had several audiences with the Pope. What were the subjects discussed at these audiences? The Canon of Eu, the Saint's biographer, does not tell us. He has taken so little trouble to obtain information from contemporary history that he makes no mention whatever of the Lateran Council. However, he is aware that Saint Laurence was in Rome, and that he pleaded eloquently for the freedom of the Church in Ireland.

There were two matters which the Archbishop must certainly have brought under the Pope's notice: the raids upon Church property by the conquerors who seized and disposed of it unscrupulously; and next, the scandalous conduct of the clerics who had come in their train from England in the hope of securing benefices. Never were the evils resulting to the Church in Ireland from the coming of the English exposed in language of such scathing severity as in the account written by an English cleric, who, some years later, accompanied Henry's youngest son, John, on a journey through Ireland. "The worst evil which can be laid to our charge," he writes, "since taking possession of the country is that we have given nothing to the churches, nay, rather did we at once set to work to take from them their possessions and their lands; we have laboured to restrict, if not to abrogate altogether, their ancient privileges. The greater number of the leaders of the invading army, Robert

FitzStephen, Hervé de Mont-Maurice, Raymond, John de Courcy and others have left no descendants. And," he continues, "this is a just punishment. The clergy, reduced to want, are begging throughout the island; the cathedrals stand in mournful desolation, stripped of all the fair lands with which they had been endowed by the piety of the faithful, and which have been torn from them by those men and by others who came with them or after them. The maxim of former days was: Let us exalt the Church; the maxim of the present day is: Let us despoil the Church."

We shall see later how badly the English clergy behaved.

To remedy these evils as far as was possible, the Pope gave to Laurence a Bull by which the Dublin Cathedral and the suffragan churches, with all their possessions, were placed under the protection of the Apostle Saint Peter. In this Bull all the possessions of the Church in Dublin were enumerated in detail, and from this we see that Saint Laurence, when leaving Dublin, fully intended to place it under the protection of the Sovereign Pontiff. After three warnings anyone working wrong to the See of Dublin was to be excommunicated. The Bull bears date the 20th April, 1179.

The Pope did still more for the Church in Ireland, In the conversations which he held with the Saint he had been much impressed by his enlightened zeal and his entire devotion to the cause of the Church's liberty Who more suited than he to represent the Papal power in Ireland? Far better than the Cardinals sent from Rome did he understand the needs and the delicate position of the Church in his native land; he would bring to its defence discernment and disinterestedness combined with firmness and prudence. Far more than the Cardinals he would be on his guard against the encroachments of the royal power. The direction of affairs in Ireland could not be entrusted to safer hands. As the Archbishop of Dublin was taking his leave Pope Alexander appointed him his Legate in Ireland.

Laurence returned to his native land honoured with the confidence of the Pope and invested with a dignity which his sanctity rendered still more exalted. It is to be regretted that we know so little concerning the Saint in his office of Papal Legate, which he held for scarcely more than a year.

The few details given by his biographer are unsatisfying in their brevity and somewhat wanting in accuracy. Laurence, he writes, in the exercise of his office, ever aimed at preserving the liberty of the Church in Ireland. All that concerned religion and the celebration of Divine Worship had his unceasing care; he insisted on the strict observance of the established ritual and, where necessary, he supplied everything needed. But the dearest wish of his heart was that the lives of the clergy should be beyond reproach.

The but too manifest licence of the English clergy was the cause of much scandal to a people accustomed to see their priests leading lives of edifying regularity. And the scandal thus given to his people occasioned the Archbishop much suffering. He acted rigorously in the suppression of such abuses. As Papal Legate, invested with supreme authority, he could have removed the ecclesiastical censures pronounced against such clerics as, after receiving Orders, had been convicted of incontinence. But, in his opinion, it was of importance for the honour of the Irish priesthood that it should be known everywhere how deplorable were the morals imported into Ireland by these strangers. He insisted that they should go to Rome and there appeal in person for the removal of the censures which they had incurred. We may form some idea of the extent of the evil from the fact that the number of priests sent to Rome for absolution at one time amounted to one hundred and - forty.

Chapter 10 - Exile - Death (October-14 November 1180)

Laurence undertakes to Plead the King of Ireland's Cause with Henry II - Henry's Displeasure - He forbids Laurence's Return to Ireland - The Saint at Abingdon; on His way to Normandy; in Sight of Eu; His Prediction - The Abbey-hostel - David sent as Envoy to Henry; His Return - Laurence's Death - Dublin Citizen's Dream - Cardinal Alexis Presides at Obsequies

From time to time across the pages of this sad history of the invasion, as if to mark its mournful stages, there flits a figure which on each occasion presents itself more and more shorn of its importance. The figure is that of Roderick O'Connor, King of Ireland.

From sympathy with the King of Meath, he, a leader without prestige and without resolution, had engaged in a war, the issue of which he was far from anticipating, and had seen his army melt away before ever giving battle to the enemy. Thus, in 1175, he was forced to accept the conditions imposed by the victor and to acknowledge himself his vassal. In 1180 he found himself threatened with the loss of his kingdom. His eldest son, in open revolt against him, had joined the enemy's ranks, and with the English army was now invading Connaught. In such an extremity Roderick had no resource save to appeal to Henry, at the same time renewing those pledges given in 1175. To plead his cause before the King it seemed to him that he could find no better advocate than the Archbishop of Dublin, who, at Henry's desire, had witnessed the treaty of Windsor, and so far was persona grata at the English Court. His rank as Papal Legate marked him out beyond all others as fitted to defend the interests of Ireland Laurence had no hesitation in undertaking a mission which had for its object the maintenance of peace. He set out for England taking with him another of Roderick's sons.

Neither the King of Connaught nor the Archbishop as yet thoroughly understood Henry's character, so complex and subtle as

to baffle the keenest observer. He was so approachable, so gracious, of such compliant, insinuating manner towards all those whom he wished to gain to his ends, and yet, in reality, so tyrannical, so impatient of opposition, so terrible in his anger, so determined in his ill-will.

Unknown to Laurence a great change had taken place in Henry's sentiments towards him. The title of Legate, with which he had returned from the Lateran Council, as was inevitable, gave offence to the King. He who, until now, had tyrannised over the Bishops and circumvented the Legates from Rome whose ignorance regarding England and Ireland rendered them all too easily his dupes, was not likely now to accept with a good grace the presence of a Legate who could not be corrupted and whose exalted virtue gave to all his words and actions incontestable authority.

Besides the uprightness and firmness of the Saint's character, his disinterestedness and his devotion to the cause of the Church were too well known to Henry to permit of any hope that he would yield to intimidation. The noble independence with which, without any regard to the King's wishes or intentions, he had laboured to restore discipline, his severity towards the English clergy, all had shown him clearly that in the Archbishop of Dublin he had to deal with one who could be neither coerced nor cajoled. Toa suspicious King, who would fain rule the Church as he ruled his kingdom, here was indeed a grievance. And it is in this grievance that we must undoubtedly seek the cause of Saint Laurence's disgrace and exile. Giraldus Cambrensis, it is true, is singular in pointing this out to us. But on this point his testimony is that of one high in favour at the English Court, who five years later accompanied the English King, John Lackland, to Ireland, and than whom there was no one in a better position to understand the motives which led the King to treat with such brutal harshness a prelate whose sanctity was everywhere recognised. Were it a mere question of the King of Connaught's embassy, if Henry had had no other grievance against the Archbishop than his devotion to the cause of Ireland, would he have forbidden his return to Ireland and thus prevent him exercising his power as Papal Legate?

On this second occasion of visiting Windsor in the role of mediator,

Laurence was accorded a far different reception. To all his proposals for peace Henry replied by reproaching him, and, finally, refusing to hear him further, he abruptly broke off the conversation. He was on the eve of starting for Normandy, but before his departure he forbade Laurence to return to Ireland, sending orders to all seaports having communication with that country that no vessel sailing for its shores should accept the Archbishop as a passenger.

Stunned by this blow wholly unexpected, Laurence sought refuge for himself and his suite in the neighbouring monastery of Abingdon, where he remained for several weeks. Then, urged by his desire to render to Roderick O'Connor the promised service, he resolved to brave the English King's anger and seek an interview with him in Normandy. Taking with him Roderick's son he embarked at Dover, landing on the French coast at Wissant. The usual route for travellers coming from Dover was by way of Wissant, Boulogne, Montreuil, Abbeville and Eu, and this was the road travelled by Saint Laurence. But scarcely had he landed in France when he was seized with a severe attack of fever. In spite of his efforts to fight against this illness he grew worse rapidly. On the third day when they reached Abbeville his companions insisted on his resting there for several days. But the desire of fulfilling the mission which he had undertaken would not allow him to rest, and he persisted in continuing his journey. Already he had a presentiment of his approaching end, and felt that in whatever place he halted there would he rest for ever. When, having crossed the great plains of Picardy, he at last reached the tableland facing Eu, he felt his strength failing.

Before him, on the right, lay the sea and the harbour, dominated by the Abbey of Saint-Michel; on the left the dense masses of forest clothing the hill-sides, reaching in some places down to the meadows, and there, in front of him, situated on the slope of a hill wooded to its summit, he saw the little town of Eu. From amidst the houses rose the Church of Notre Dame, built on the terrace still encircled by the walls of the ancient castle. Perhaps as the Saint. gazed on that panorama there rose before him a vision of the city, so dear to him, far away by the Liffey. Certain it is that he must have experienced satisfaction at finding himself so near the Norman dominions of the King of England. At last the goal was in sight; his

ardent desire to accomplish his task was, now, indeed, it seemed to him, near to realisation.

"What is the name of that church?" he asked of some passers-by.

"The Church of Notre Dame d'Eu," was the answer.

"And who are the priests attached to it?" he questioned further.

"The Canons Regular from Saint Victor, in Paris."

"This is the place of my abode," said the Archbishop, in the words of the Psalmist, "here will I rest for ever: here will I dwell for I have chosen it."

In after years these words and the place where they were spoken were recalled. On the spot where the Saint halted a cross was erected, and in the seventeenth century a chapel was built there which is visited by pilgrims during the May celebrations.

In the official report of a miracle attributed to Saint Laurence there is mention of Ansel, one of the Canons of Rouen Cathedral and a native of Eu, as bearing testimony to the truth of the deposition, and then it is recorded that the Canon was one of those who, on the mountain slopes of Picardy, heard the Saint repeating the words of the Royal Psalmist.

Bestowing his blessing on his informants the Saint then descended the slopes, and going to the Church of Notre Dame prayed there for a brief space.

As in the case of all monasteries, at the entrance to the Abbey of Eu was a hostel for the reception of travellers and pilgrims. In the fifty-third chapter of his Rule Saint Benedict, the great Patriarch of the Monks of the West, writes: "Let every guest be received as if he were Christ Himself. Let the poor and pilgrims be received with marked attention; it is in receiving these that above all others we receive Christ." And it became everywhere the custom to frequent these hostels which provided the passing stranger with food and shelter.

On leaving the church Saint Laurence sought the guesthouse, which

was close at hand, and almost immediately retired to rest. The Saint had barely reached his fiftieth year, but his austerities and the multiplied cares and trials of his already long episcopate had sapped his strength and vigour. He felt that death was near and, anxious that it might not find him unprepared, he sent for the Abbot, and making his confession, received the Blessed Eucharist. Then, remembering the mission which had led him to Normandy, and to the last hour of . life ever desirous of securing to his native land somewhat of peace, he sent Roderick's son together with his tutor, a priest named David, to seek an audience with Henry. On his return David found the Archbishop on the point of death.

Towards the close of the third day, feeling the end approaching, Laurence called to his bedside the Abbot and the monks. Desirous of having part henceforth in all their prayers and good works, he begged that he might be admitted as one of their community, after which he received Extreme Unction. Being advised to dispose of his property by will, the Saint made answer: "God is my witness that there no longer remain to me houses or lands or money."

In these last supreme hours of life, about to appear before God, there passed before the Saint in solemn review the various periods of his career; more especially did his mind seem to dwell on the years so filled with trouble of his episcopate, and his solicitude for his people betrayed itself in the exclamations which broke from him occasionally. "Foolish people," he was heard to murmur, "what will become of you henceforth? Who will help you now in your troubles?"

When the priest who had accompanied Roderick's son to the King returned on the fourth day, the Archbishop was no longer able to speak. But his mind still remained perfectly clear. He listened with visible emotion to David's account of his mission. Henry had permitted himself to be softened. He promised to accept Roderick's overtures of peace, and received his son as hostage. To give expression to the joy which he felt at this news and to testify his gratitude to him who was the bearer of it, the Saint for a moment leaned his head against the priest's breast. A few minutes afterwards, on the evening of Friday, November 14th, 1180, the soul of Saint Laurence O'Toole passed to God.

Meanwhile, much anxiety was felt in Dublin concerning the fate of the Archbishop. The news of his exile and of his departure for Normandy following in quick succession, aroused alarm and kept people on the alert for what would happen. The night on which the Saint died one of the citizens dreamt that he found himself in the Cathedral where he saw the High Altar suddenly fall to pieces and crumble into dust. Everyone to whom he related this dream next morning at once cried out: "The Archbishop is dead."

The Saint was buried at Eu with solemn funeral ceremonies. The Canons attached to the church were lamenting that they could procure no Bishop to preside at the obsequies when there arrived to visit them most unexpectedly a Papal Legate on his return to Rome from Scotland. Cardinal Alexis, an Italian by birth, in early youth had been sent to study in Paris, and had been lodged at Saint Victor. His friendship for that house induced him to break his journey on his return from Scotland to visit the priests at Eu. The Cardinal presided at the funeral ceremonies and pronounced the final benedictions over the holy dead, whose mortal remains were then laid to rest in the Church of Notre Dame.

In after years, remembering the glory shed upon their Abbey by those closing scenes in the life of the stranger from the far-off isle in the West, who within its hospitable walls had passed to eternal rest, seeing the crowds who flocked from all parts to kneel at his tomb, and the splendour of their church due to the generosity of those pilgrims, the Canons of Eu when singing the Office of Saint Laurence added these words: "O happy guest-house! rejoice that thou didst receive so illustrious a guest."

Chapter 11 - Beginning of the Devotion to the Saint - The Canonisation (1186-1226)

The First Miracle - Translation of Saint's Remains to the new Crypt - Pilgrimages to the Tomb - Visits and Testimony of the Irish Prelates - First Records of Miracles - Proceedings at Rome with a View to Laurence's Canonisation - Reply of Celestine III - Abbot Guy's first journey to Rome - The Cardinal Presenter (Ponente) of Laurence's Cause - Canonical Investigation - Abbot Guy with the Pope at Rieti - Canonisation Ceremonies - Abbot Guy's Return

Those few days - the last of his mortal life - which he spent at the Abbey had sufficed to convince the Canons of Eu of their guest's eminent sanctity, a conviction in which, as they learned from Laurence's companions, all Ireland shared. Henry's most intimate friends bore testimony to this fact themselves. Writing of the Archbishop of Dublin, Giraldus Cambrensis says: "He was a just and good man. Because of his zeal for his people, he fell into disfavour with the King; God has glorified him by miracles."

Saint Laurence had been but a short time dead when, kneeling around the flat pavement stone which covered his grave in the centre of the church, might have been seen numbers of those afflicted ones who are accustomed to seek relief in their sufferings through the intercession of the Saints. In that age of faith the people regarded the Saints as elder brothers who, having attained to heavenly bliss, still continued in the glorious land beyond the grave to exercise that same tender charity which during their mortal life had won for them the love and veneration of their fellow-creatures. To these poor afflicted ones the science of medicine could offer little or no relief. Earthly remedy there was none, Hence, they

turned for aid to those who whilst on earth had been to the afflicted as God's ministering angels, and who, they felt convinced, would still continue now that they were admitted to the glory of His Presence to discharge that same office in their regard. "'As human science was of no avail," says Emile Male, "it was of absolute necessity at all costs to have a heavenly protector."

And thus it was that the sick, usually accompanied by some of their relatives, crowded to the shrines, praying patiently, perseveringly, before the tombs of the most illustrious of the friends of God. To these sufferers it seemed that supernatural virtue still dwelt in the precious remains enshrined in those tombs, and they waited patiently for the moment when they should experience its healing influence.

For more than forty years after his death such were the scenes daily witnessed around the tomb of the Archbishop of Dublin.

The Saint had been but a short time buried, and already people were speaking of cures which had taken place at his grave, when, to confirm their faith, there occurred a more striking manifestation of the power of his intercession than any hitherto recorded.

There was at the court of the Count of Eu a child of about seven or eight years of age who had been deaf and dumb from birth. His parents who were wealthy, had taken him to several shrines, including that of Saint Thomas a Becket at Canterbury. But so far all their prayers had remained unheard. Hearing of the cures wrought at the tomb of Saint Laurence, with renewed hope and confidence they took their afflicted child to Eu, where they prayed long and fervently, kneeling on the stone which covered the Saint's grave. Suddenly the child's tongue was loosed and his ears were opened. But, cut off since birth from all communication with the outer world, he could only repeat what was said to him. They spoke to him in French, in Latin, in English, the languages at that time in common use. He repeated, without in the least understanding, the words spoken to him. This time the Canons would have the miracle formally attested. They received the depositions of four priests, two knights, and two lay persons, all of whom testified on oath to the truth of their statement.

The well-known infirmity of the child, Roger de Blangy, his parent's rank and connection with the court, all combined to give this miracle wide-spread publicity. It was easy to see that henceforth the crowds round the tomb of him whom all acclaimed as a Saint would grow greater and greater. The Canons foresaw what would happen and knew that soon their church could not contain the numbers who would seek Laurence's intercession. At the foot of the lower mountain slopes on which is built the little town of Eu, there extends a terrace the base of which runs downwards to the meadows, a kind of advanced promontory, commanding from above and from below a view of the valley of the Bresle. The conquest of the country once effected, the Normans had set to work immediately to establish at this point a *castrum*, the terminus, as it were, of the line of fortresses which marked their northern frontier. Within the enceinte of this castrum was a small church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. On the creation of the Count of Eu the *castrum* became the courtyard of the feudal castle. Later, when the Canons who served the Church of Notre Dame manifested a desire to live in community, the Count gave them possession of this church, at the northern side of which they built their cloisters. It was this small church, already old and threatening to fall, which they intended to rebuild.

(*The priests were not mistaken. Soon there arose over the crypt a church in the Gothic style, one of the most beautiful in that region. The ever-growing devotion to Saint Laurence O'Toole provided them with complete funds for the completion of the work. "From the most distant countries," wrote Abbot Hugues, "the pilgrims come here to fulfil their vows. Thanks to their offerings, for the last twenty-six years we have had a church built of stone in honour of the Blessed Virgin." Numbers did far more than make offerings of money. Led by Canon Mathieu, director of the works, they drew the heavy carts which carried the stones used in the construction of the walls of the edifice.*)

It ill-accorded with the reverence due to the Saint that his tomb should be allowed to remain exposed to the weather. Nor was it fitting that the organised devotion now beginning to manifest itself round that tomb should be interrupted. Therefore, before the ancient church was completely demolished, the Canons caused a crypt of vast proportions to be dug at the southeast end. They

wished their crypt to be large, spacious, and of great depth to permit of the pilgrims who were ever increasing in number passing freely round the tomb. As soon as this crypt was covered in the Canons removed the body of the Saint from the place where it had lain for five years and some months, and re-interred it in the centre of the crypt (17th April, 1186).

The monument raised over the grave was surmounted by a recumbent statue which is yet to be seen on a sarcophagus. In this statue, sculptured soon after his death, we have preserved to us a faithful likeness of the Saint, and in its proportions it corresponds with what his biographer tells us of his appearance. "Our Saint was of tall and elegant figure." The Archbishop is represented with flowing beard and is robed in all his pontifical vestments, tunic, dalmatic, and the chasuble worn in the Middle Ages; he is wearing his mitre, and between his hands is the crozier. The monument was enclosed with latticed iron-work. To preserve order more effectually in the crypt the Canons retained control of the entrance which was connected with the Abbey by a narrow passage to which access could only be gained by traversing the cloister. For forty years this crypt was continually visited by pilgrims who came from all parts. Within a radius of more than ten leagues everyone suffering from disease or infirmity turned their anxious gaze towards that tomb, whilst they vowed to go to it in pilgrimage, some to return thanks for their cure, others to offer their supplications. Encouraged by the accounts of those who had been cured, their confidence was unalterable. Ever hoping that their desires would be realised they prolonged their stay, and continued their prayers far into the night, endeavouring to get as close to the tomb as possible; some, the better to contemplate it, passed their heads through the lattices of the grating, and sometimes overcome with fatigue, fell asleep in that position. Mothers would lay their sick children on the tomb whilst they called on the Saint to cure them.

The sailors at Tréport, continually exposed to the perils of the sea, never failed to invoke the Saint's intercession when the fury of the tempest seemed to threaten them with certain death. From the very first they were amongst those who sought his shrine, and they were to be seen there fulfilling their vows, or at other times relating to the Canons the story of their miraculous delivery from shipwreck.

The priests from the beginning were careful to register the miracles attributed to the Saint's intercession, at the same time taking infinite pains that these should be authenticated by the evidence of reliable witnesses who were subjected to a searching cross-examination and obliged to swear to the truth of their statements. Sometimes it even happened that, somewhat distrustful of the people's enthusiasm, the Canons would argue against the evidence.

On one occasion two sailors were relating their miraculous escape from death, due, as they declared, to Saint Laurence's intercession. "In the middle of the night," they told the priests, "we were overtaken by such a fearful tempest that of our twelve oars we lost five, and at the same time our ropes and anchor were swept away. We never ceased imploring Saint Laurence to help us until, tossed to and fro by the billows, at last we reached the harbour in safety where we procured some oars." "But," objected the priests, "with the oars that were left to you, could you not have contrived to reach the harbour?" "No," was the reply; "with all the oars in the world we could not have escaped death so great was the storm."

The fame of these miracles spread far and wide, and Eu and its glorious wonder-worker were heard of even in the most remote places. From Valenciennes, from the north, from the south, from Milly-en-Gastinais, from Poitou, flocked the sick to the little town at the foot of the mountains of Picardy. On some days the crowds were so great that the courtyard of the castle could not contain them.

Amongst these pilgrims were many from Ireland, some bearing illustrious names. During his lifetime, in his own country, the Archbishop had been regarded as a Saint, and now, dead in a foreign land and taking his last rest amongst strangers, the hearts of his people turned to him in his distant grave with increased love and veneration. Men held it as a work of piety to cross the seas and to kneel at the tomb of him whose sanctity shed such lustre on Ireland. In a continuous stream came the Irish clergy of all grades - clerics, priests, religious, Canons, Abbots and Bishops - all bringing to the Chapter of Eu precious evidence regarding the life and sanctity of Archbishop Laurence. To Eu came the Saint's nephew, Thomas, the Abbot of Glendalough, and with him those who had

lived in closest intimacy with Laurence: Albin of Ferns, Marianus of Cork, Malachi of Louth, the latter bearing one of the first lists of miracles which was later to find a place in the life of Saint Laurence; John Comyn, Laurence's successor in the See of Dublin, who will testify hereafter to having witnessed the cure, at the tomb, of a man for fifteen years deaf and dumb. All these distinguished Irish pilgrims shared in the desire of the Chapter to see the supreme sanction of the Church given to this devotion, daily growing greater. And with their testimony they offered at the same time their help in furthering this end.

A century had passed since the Popes made known that they reserved to themselves the right of inscribing Saints on the Calendar of the Church. On the accession of Celestine III to the Chair of Peter, Walter the Magnificent, Archbishop of Rouen, went to Rome, bearing with him to be laid before the Pope, together with the petition of the Canons of Eu supported by the letters of Bishops and seculars, a brief account of the life and miracles of the sainted Archbishop of Dublin. But Rome is accustomed to act in these matters with prudent slowness. The Pope replied to the Canons that the affairs of the Church would not permit of his attending to their petition just at that time, and the cause of the Archbishop was, therefore, adjourned, May 20th, 1191.

During the pontificate of Innocent III, about 1207, a fresh application, the fourth, writes the Abbot, was made, but, like the others, it was of no avail, although the Canons had taken care to have appended to their petition the names of all those witnesses whose evidence would be most likely to carry conviction, amongst them the Archbishop of Rouen, ever devoted to their cause, and who wrote to the Pope: "The time has come to bring forward into the full light of day this hidden treasure which divine favour has pointed out to us by the most striking signs and the clearest proofs."" With him were associated the Irish prelates best qualified to express an opinion, Laurence's disciples, Albin of Ferns, Marianus of Cork, John Comyn, Archbishop of Dublin, and the Archbishop of Armagh, the latter making solemn declaration that there was no place in Ireland where the fame of Archbishop Laurence's sanctity had not spread.

The years passed. About 1214 an Abbot named Guy, just elected, wrote to the Pope reminding him that his province alone was it to proclaim the sanctity of the servants of God. "And now," he added, "for thirty-four years miracles have followed miracles. Seeking to be cured the crowds come not merely from the neighbouring districts, but from the lands beyond the seas, from the extreme ends of England and of Ireland." To Innocent III succeeded Honorius III, but still no answer came from Rome. At last the Canons realised that the Archbishop's cause would have no chance of success until some one, active and zealous, went to Rome to try to expedite matters, Accordingly they deputed their Abbot to undertake the task. Furnished with all the papers pertaining to the inquiry into Laurence's life and miracles, set on foot at his request, by the Archbishop of Dublin, the Abbot, happy in the thought that he had thus anticipated the requirements of the Papal tribunal, set out for the Eternal City. But there a disappointment awaited him.

The Archbishop of Dublin having acted without authority the inquiry was null and void. He was obliged, therefore, to return to France. He had, however, gained two compensating points. The Cardinal- Bishop of Tusculum had been appointed to present Laurence's cause, and Guy bore with him a Papal Bull charging the Archbishop of Rouen to hold an inquiry according to all canonical rules in France and Ireland (December 5th, 1225). At once, in both countries, the Pope's commands were obeyed with the utmost alacrity. Guy, carrying with him all the evidence, returned to Italy in the month of October, 1226 (he was received by the Pope on the 27th of the same month), the Papal Court being then at Rieti.

The Cardinal-Bishop of Tusculum, into whose hands he remitted the papers, was so delighted with what he read that he seems from the very first to have adopted the Abbot's views. Already Guy allowed himself to hope that the coming 14th of November, the anniversary of Laurence's death, might be the day of his canonisation, when, by order of the Pope, the Cardinal was obliged to depart for Rome. Having fulfilled his mission there, the Cardinal, remembering that he was Bishop of Tusculum, proceeded to visit his diocese. All this time in agonies of suspense Abbot Guy waited at Rieti, seeing week after week pass away without advancing the canonisation by one single step. At last in the beginning of December, torrential rains

interrupted the episcopal visitation and the Cardinal returning to his attendance upon the Pope once more took in hands the process.

The day after his arrival he sought the presence of the Sovereign Pontiff and earnestly solicited that the examination into the cause might be no longer delayed. The 4th of December was fixed for the opening of the process. On that day, in the presence of the Holy Father and before an assemblage of Cardinals and Bishops, amongst whom were the Archbishop of Bordeaux, the Bishops of Bethlehem, Catana, Troyes, Norwich, and Rieti, were read all the official reports of the inquiry into the Archbishop's life and miracles. The reading of these occupied a considerable portion of the day. The assembly next deliberated on the various facts recounted, the discussion was prolonged to such a late hour that when they were about to close it by a vote of approval it was found that the extern Bishops, following the Pope's chaplains, had retired. Hence the voting had to be postponed until the following day.

All the distinguished ecclesiastics then at Rieti assembled early next morning, and unanimously declared that Laurence's name should be inscribed on the Calendar of Saints. Then, with the Pope, they proceeded to the Cathedral, where, in a fresh report, the Bishop of Tusculum presented a summary of the exhaustive examination conducted on the previous day. Whereupon the Pope, in a loud voice, proclaimed that he had placed Laurence's name on the Calendar of Saints, and that henceforth the Archbishop of Dublin would be ranked amongst the Confessors of the Church. The announcement was received with much gratification by all present. Pope Honorius then intoned the *Te Deum*, after which, with the prayer appointed for the Feasts of Bishops and Confessors, *Da quaesumus*, the ceremonies of the canonisation were brought to a conclusion.

Carrying with him the Bull of Canonisation and letters from the Cardinal-Bishop of Tusculum enjoining the Archbishop of Rouen and the Bishop of Amiens to have the Feast of Saint Laurence celebrated, henceforth in their diocese on the 14th November, Abbot Guy returned to Eu, where he was received as an angel from Heaven.

There were manifestations of joy throughout the whole country

when the happy result of his mission to Rome became known.

Chapter 12 - The Saint's Remains

Translation - Invention of the Body of the Saint - Enormous Gathering of the People - Exposition of Relics at the Market Square - Three Reliquaries - Hidden in the Crypt during the Reign of Terror - Removed to new Shrines - Verifications - Gifts of Relics

The devotion hitherto practised in the semi-darkness of the crypt was now to be manifested in the broad light of day and with all the splendour of liturgical solemnity. The hour had come when the venerated remains should be removed from the tomb and exposed on the altar in the splendid sanctuary built for their reception. The whole of the edifice covering in the crypt, the sanctuary, choir, transept, and the two upper bays of the nave were, at that time, complete. With the consent of Thibaut d'Amiens, Archbishop of Rouen, the ceremony of transferring the Saint's remains was fixed for Sunday, 10th May. Amongst the invited guests were the Bishop of Amiens, a native of Eu, Geoffrey, the Prior of Saint-Victor in Paris and Superior of the Order to which the Canons belonged, also some delegates from the Chapter of Rouen. Fears were entertained that, owing to the enormous crowds which would certainly be present, it would not be possible to effect with decorum and safety the exhumation of the precious remains. It was decided, therefore, that they should be exhumed beforehand. Accordingly, in the presence of the Abbot and several of his brethren in religion, of the Canons from Rouen, and the Prior of Saint-Victor, five days before the Feast itself the tomb was opened. The identity of the venerated remains having been duly attested, the skull and the right arm were set apart to be enshrined, each in a separate reliquary; the rest of the remains being wrapped in a piece of thick silk and enclosed in a deer-skin bag which was then placed in the tomb provisionally.

On the morning of Sunday the town was filled to overflowing. A dense crowd crammed the church and overflowed into the square where locomotion soon became impossible, But, at a very early hour the clergy, having at their head the Archbishop of Rouen and the Bishop of Amiens and accompanied by the nobles of the neighbourhood, had assembled in the crypt where they witnessed the raising from the earth of the sacred relics. When, somewhat

later, they wished to proceed in procession to the square where a tribune had been erected for the ceremony of exposing the relics, it was found that all the passages were completely blocked. In all haste an opening was made in the wall of the Chapter-house, and the procession was formed in the adjacent court-yard. The way was led by the barons and knights who, with great difficulty, forced a passage to the tribune where the shrine destined to receive the - body of the Saint had been already placed. The plates of chased silver adorning it were purchased with the proceeds of a collection made by the Archbishop himself. After the sermon, amidst breathless silence, the Bishops removed from their silken wrappings the holy remains and placed them in the shrine; the other relics were then brought, and the Archbishop, taking the skull in his hands, raised it and presented it to the crowds which surrounded the tribune. The exposition having taken place, the procession reformed and the shrine of Saint Laurence was carried to the spot where it was to rest henceforth at the end of the sanctuary, behind the High Altar. If we are to believe Le Beuf, it was supported by four pillars of porphyry. At the beginning of the eighteenth century when the Abbey Chapter, yielding to the bad taste of the period, draped the pillars of the sanctuary in Louis XV. style, they constructed a platform somewhat higher up, and there on a credence table placed the shrine.

Since 1226 the shrine of Saint Laurence has dominated the apse of the Church of Notre Dame. A sanctuary is reserved to it which includes the whole of the apse. So well was it enclosed at the beginning, that to reach it the faithful were obliged to cross the Chapter-choir. In the beginning of the thirteenth century the pillars of the apse were connected by a pierced stone enclosure, with doors at both ends. To this spot, from the day that the Saint's relics were placed there, pilgrims flocked continuously to implore his intercession in the full conviction that if they were allowed to kneel for a few moments beneath the shrine they would experience more efficaciously the virtue which emanated from those holy remains.

For long years crowds continued to flock to Eu. Having prayed beneath the shrine the pilgrims went to visit the crypt; some of the sick carried their devotion so far as to have themselves lowered into the tomb wherein for forty years the body of the Saint had rested.

Naturally such proceedings created some disorder, both in the monastery and in the church. This was noticed by Archbishop Eudes Rigaud on his first visit to the sanctuary, and he complained of it. Then he tried to remedy the grievance by the following arrangements: seculars were no longer to enter the cloister; the Canons would provide for their access to the shrine without it being necessary to pass through the choir. But as the Canons justly observed such measures would have the effect of depriving them of all means of living, as the pilgrims were accustomed to make their offerings at the entrance to the choir and cloister (1260).

After the translation of the holy remains the priests continued the registration of the miracles until the number recorded amounted to two hundred and sixty, when, as was said, the Canons grew tired of it, if we may so believe, and the work of registration was no longer carried on. But we must not infer from this that the miracles had ceased. One of the latest date has been related by M. Lemasurier, a member of whose family was the recipient of the miraculous favour.

The Saint's head had been enclosed in a marble cup mounted on a bronze foot and having a silver cover. When they arrived at Eu in 1632 the Canons of Saint Geneviéve found that this reliquary had been broken, and was altogether in a bad condition. Without delay they replaced it by a silver bust within which Monsignor François II de Harlay, on the occasion of his first pastoral visit, May 2nd, 1652, placed the skull of Saint Laurence. The bust represented a Bishop wearing his mitre and vested in his cope and stole; it weighed thirty-eight marcs and one ounce, the total cost being 894 livres.

A bone from the Saint's right arm was enshrined in a reliquary described by Le Beuf, which may yet be seen in a house at Eu. Until the year 1790 these three reliquaries, the large shrine, the head and the arm remained in the care of the Chapter. Willingly would they have retained possession of them. But when they were leaving Eu the municipality took care to assert their right to the relics. "It does not suffice," said these officials, "for us to have care of the church, there is yet another object of interest to the community. The shrine, the head, and the relics of Saint Laurence, Archbishop of Dublin, belong to the parish. Therefore the citizens must claim them, and remove them from the inventory drawn up by the religious" (26th

February, 1791).

Vain precaution! The representatives of the Convention attached little importance to municipal rights. Towards the close of 1793 an order to close the churches was awaited, and meanwhile they were pillaged. On the 11th December the municipality of Eu received from the Department a letter requesting them to send to Rouen all the silver plate belonging to the churches. As the inhabitants were not in a hurry to obey this injunction an agent from the Dieppe district was charged with its execution. A letter received on the 28th December announced that on the following day citizen Lamouque would pay them a visit. Citizen Lamouque duly arrived to assure himself, as he told them, that the laws were rightly observed in the township of Eu.

Thus, then, the shrines were to be profaned and pillaged. During the night the Vicars lifted down the large shrine, and "Having laid it in the sanctuary at the Gospel side, they opened it and removed all the holy relics wrapping them in silk and woollen cloths, coloured green and red, after which they deposited them in a hole dug in the cellar filling this in again with the clay, and taking care to trample it down by walking over it so that no trace of their work might remain." They did not venture to touch the two reliquaries locked up in the sacristy, perhaps from fear of compromising themselves.

The following day, as they had foreseen, the agent of the Revolution presented himself at the church. He despoiled the large shrine of the silver ornaments and precious stones with which it was adorned, without troubling himself about the relics. He demanded that the two reliquaries kept in the sacristy should be given up to him, opened them, threw the relics on the floor, and having weighed the silver bust took it away with him.

The beadle, Bourgeois, who had assisted in this sacrilege returned to the sacristy when Lamouque was gone, and picking up the Saint's skull, wrapped it in an amice and sent it to the Vicar. M. Deruelle fearing to keep the precious relic in his house, entrusted it to M. Delahuppe, who had been mayor the preceding year.

Scarcely was the Church of Notre Dame re-opened for Divine worship than efforts were made to recover the relics and to have

them enclosed in new shrines. "The Saint's remains were removed from the cellar by the Abbé Deruelle, assisted by the Abbé Maillard, Curé of Saint Pierre en Val, M. Delépine, and M. Sore, Curé of Tully. At that time the cellar was not paved, and the soil in which the holy remains had been deposited was pure clay. It was feared, therefore, that the piece of cloth in which they had been wrapped might have rotted and the sacred relics thus have suffered injury. But to the great astonishment of all present the cloth was found to be as fresh and its colours as bright as on the day when the Saint's body had been placed in the earth.

A table had been placed in the front sanctuary for the translation of the remains to the actual shrine, made, as we see, in the form of an ark, opening at the top and - closed by four screw-nails. The shrine was borne in solemn procession through the town, and the ceremony concluded with the celebration of High Mass, followed by the *Te Deum*.

The sacred head of Saint Laurence was at first enclosed in a small wooden reliquary surmounted by a cross. This was, indeed, too poor a shrine for so precious a relic which was borne every year on each of the Saint's two Feasts through the town in solemn procession, A few years later a devout parishioner, Madame de Certeuil, replaced it by a large bust in copper plated with silver. This bust was made in Paris and sent to Rome where the relic had been carried. M. Coudrin, one of the Vicar-Generals, attested its genuineness and placed it in the new reliquary.

Everyone desired that the large shrine should receive similar verification. In 1841 the Curé of Eu took advantage of the sojourn in the town of Cardinal Croy to have this done. On the 23rd April, in the presence of the Vicar-General, M. Fayet, the priests of the parish, and two members of the Church Committee, the large shrine was lowered and laid on the credence table on the Epistle side of the Altar.

("This shrine," writes M. Lemasurier, "appeared to contain very nearly all the bones of the holy body, and from them we gather that the Saint must have been very tall and strongly built. The lower jaw-bone also seemed to us large and strong; it was perfect on the right side, and all the teeth on that side were quite sound. All the molars on the left side

were, with the exception of the last one, equally sound. Not far from this tooth the end of the jaw-bone had been broken. The reliquary containing the skull was likewise opened and the seal broken. By order of M. Fayet the lower jaw-bone with its teeth was removed from the shrine and placed in this reliquary, after which all the reliquaries were sealed and replaced in their original position.")

In July, 1876, the remains were once more subjected to examination. Cardinal Bonnechose, who had gone to Eu for the consecration of the chapel on the hillside, presided at the opening of the shrines. He made almost the same statements.

However much the Canons of Eu desired to preserve intact the precious treasure of Saint Laurence's remains, they could not refuse to concede to the Abbeys with which they had relations some minute particles. Thus we find these relics at Saint-Victor, in Paris, at the Hétel Dieu, and later at the Val-de-Grace, and in the Rouen diocese, at Saint-Wandrille. In 1251, by entering into a union of prayers, their neighbours, the Religious of Sery, had obtained a like concession. In return they engaged to celebrate the Saint's two annual Feasts, by an Office of nine lessons. It was the same during the succeeding centuries. In 1610 two Jesuits, Father Biard and Father Massé, being about to embark at Dieppe for Acadia, went to spend a few weeks at the College of Eu. To assure the success, as they said, of their mission, they solicited from the Abbey Chapter a relic of Saint Laurence. The Abbé de la Place yielded to their entreaties. He took from the reliquary containing the head a small fragment of the skull, *sinistvum os lithoides cranit*, and gave it to them, but on these conditions: the Fathers should, later, make known to him the place where they had deposited the precious relic, the veneration of which it might be the object, and in the event of their return to France, they should restore the relic (17th November).

After a few years (1613), the Jesuits were made prisoners by the English. Father Massé, on regaining his liberty, returned to Paris, bringing with him the relic which, through the Procurator of the Province, he restored to the Abbé de la Place; the latter kept it in his own house, and on his death his heir presented it to his parish church of Saint Godard in Rouen. It is preserved there in its original

oval-shaped reliquary of gilt-copper. On the 1st May, 1838, Cardinal Croy testified to its authenticity.

Some years afterwards, two of the Canons of Eu, returning from a pilgrimage to Notre Dame de Liesse, broke their journey at the Abbey of Saint Vincent-de-Senlis. They were surprised to learn that the cloister chapel in which they heard Mass was dedicated to Saint Laurence, Archbishop of Dublin. When they told that in their church they possessed the body of this Saint the Religious of Senlis entreated that they would obtain for them the smallest fragment of the precious relics. After some hesitation, the Abbé de la Place acceded to their request. Opening the reliquary containing the ulnar bone, he sawed off a portion which he sent to the Religious at Senlis "to be placed in their church and there venerated" (23rd September, 1621).

The next to petition for a relic of the Saint was the King of France, Louis XIII., who at the time was asking of all the churches in France some small portion of the relics which they possessed. He presented his request to the Chapter of Eu through the governor of the town, M. de Lannoy. For the second time the reliquary containing the ulnar bone was opened, and a second piece, about an inch in size, was cut off and entrusted to the Prior "‘that he might himself deposit it in his Majesty's hands" (2nd September, 1641).

On the occasion of the opening of the large shrine in 1841 and again in 1876, the then Archbishops took away some of the bones. M. Fayet took with him "three teeth from the upper jawbone, and six or seven of the bones of the finger-joints enclosed in a silken sachet." One of these small bones which remained in the possession of M. Lemasurier afterwards passed into the hands of his relatives, Canon Lefebre, Curé of Saint-Vivien in Rouen, who quite recently presented it to the Church of Saint Laurence O'Toole in Dublin.

Ireland had already received two relics of the Saint. In. 1842 M. Lemasurier found a bone which, in 1795, had been laid aside, and in that same year he had it verified by Mgr. de Croy. A few years later, on the occasion of the visit of the Archdeacon of Dublin, he presented this relic to him; it is now in the possession of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Laurence's parish in Dublin. A second relic, now in the private chapel of the Archbishop of Dublin, was given, in

1872, to Cardinal Cullen by Mgr. de Bonnechose in recognition of the friendship shown by the Irish people to France during the war of 1870.

In his official statement Monsignor Bonnechose makes mention of the particular portions of the holy remains which he took from the large shrine and also their destination. "We have taken two of the spine-bones," he writes, "one of which we shall have exposed for the veneration of the faithful in the new chapel dedicated to the Saint, whilst the other shall be deposited in our archiepiscopal treasury."

Chapter 13 - Devotion to the Saint

Laurence Patron of the Town of Eu - Proofs of His Protection - Chapel on the Hill-side in Picardy - Feasts of May 10th and November 14th - Office Composed by the Canons of Saint Victor - Devotion to Saint Laurence O'Toole in Normandy, in Ireland, and in America

In their veneration for Saint Laurence O'Toole and their confidence in his intercession the inhabitants of Eu have never been surpassed. He is for them, literally, the protector of their city, over which from the sanctuary where rests his shrine the Saint keeps watch and ward; of this all are absolutely convinced. Hence in times of public or private misfortune to him are turned all eyes, to him all make supplication. In periods of drought or of epidemics the civic dignitaries request the Canons to carry the holy reliquaries through the city. And at the least delay in complying with this request the people become impatient and grumble. These processions, in which all the inhabitants take part afford striking manifestation of the faith in Saint Laurence's protection. First come the priests and confraternities from the four parishes with their crosses and banners, then the Canons, vested in alb and barefoot, carrying the large shrine and the smaller reliquaries. Everyone prepares for this ceremony by a fast of three days, In times of epidemic when, to prevent the spread of disease, those attacked are removed to wooden huts outside the city, "for the consolation of the poor plaguestricken ones," the procession goes out by the Mouillette gate and returns by that of Tréport. When, as often happens, before the close of the procession the town is delivered from the calamities afflicting it all recognise in this deliverance the effect of the Saint's intercession.

More than once, notably in 1609, 1626, and 1690, owing to carelessness on the part of the plumbers, the roof of the cathedral took fire, and the flames spreading rapidly had already reached the spire when, as the witnesses declare, thanks to the intercession of Saint Laurence, the fire ceased to spread further and was soon extinguished.

The devotion of the present-day pilgrims leads them rather to the

mountain slopes of Picardy, to that spot where the Saint, pausing for a moment, repeated the words of the Psalmist: "This is the place of my abode." Very shortly after his death a cross was placed there, the base of which can still be seen half-buried in the ground. In the seventeenth century an inhabitant of Eu built a chapel quite close to the spot; since then this chapel has been twice rebuilt. Each year, on the morning of May 10th, the anniversary of the translation of the Saint's remains, the people of Eu go there in procession, whilst during the Octave pilgrims from all parts ascend the hillside to implore in that little sanctuary the intercession of Saint Laurence.

The Canons of Eu belonged to that Order of Saint Victor in Paris which, half a century earlier, had numbered amongst its members "the greatest liturgical poet of the Middle Ages." 1 The taste for liturgical compositions from that time was ever held in honour amongst them. Inspired by the life of Saint Laurence the Canons composed for his two Feasts, of May 10th and November 14th, an Office in graceful verse, which begins by this joyous canticle:

"With what glorious brightness now shines the Church of Eu which the holy Bishop, Saint Laurence, has exalted and enriched with his body.

"Blessed guest who when he chose to enter into the Church of Eu did make blest its hospitality."

The honour in which the ancient Gregorian chant was held at that time did not permit of any change being made in the score of the Mass, notwithstanding which the Canons found a method of embellishing it. On each day of the Oetete a different hymn was sung during Mass.

This Office, in which are expressed so fully the joy and gratitude of the Church of Eu, remained for a long time in manuscript. In 1610, through the efforts of the Abbé de la Place, it first appeared in print. It continued to be used at Eu until 1758, when the Canon who, in that year, wrote the *Abrégé de la Vie et des Miracles de Saint Laurent*, conceived it a duty to conform to the ideas prevailing at that time according to which none but the words of Holy Scripture should find place in the Liturgy. The old Office! was superseded by one composed in *centons*.

To the splendour of the ceremonies at the translation of the Saint's remains and the part taken in them by the Archbishop of Rouen, must be attributed the rapid spread of the devotion to him in the Norman monasteries. The Feast of the 14th November was celebrated with twelve lessons at Saint-Ouen in Rouen, at Bonne-Nouvelle, and at Bec; with eight lessons at Tréport, Sainte-Catherine, Saint-Wandrille, at Jumiéges, at the Priory of Beaulieu, and with three at Saint-Georges de Boscherville. We find it mentioned in the fifteenth century liturgical manuscripts of Coutances and of Lisieux.

Until 1640 the two Feasts were celebrated according to dominical rite in Rouen Cathedral. In that year the Feast of l0th May was suppressed. From the beginning of the fourteenth century there was always a chapel dedicated to Saint Laurence in the Cathedral, the first founder being the treasurer, Paul le Blattier; it was in the gift of the Archdeacon of Eu.

In Ireland, owing to ages of persecution, all external evidence of the devotion to Saint Laurence had vanished, But no persecution availed to efface his memory, so lovingly cherished by Irish hearts. Raised far above all the enmity, the weakness, the sorrow by which the English invasion has been marked, clear against the gloomy background of the mournful past, surrounded by the aureole of sanctity and of true patriotism, stands forth the figure of Laurence O'Toole, Archbishop of Dublin. The Irish people love him, admire him, venerate him; in their hearts he is second only to Saint Patrick, Ireland's great Apostle.

Within the last century churches have been erected under his invocation in those places which more particularly recall memories of the Saint; at Levitstown, in the parish of Castledermot, assigned by a tradition requiring better foundation as his birth-place; at Roundwood, in the parish of Glendalough; and in the city of Dublin (1850).

Borne by Irish exiles across the Atlantic, devotion to the sainted Archbishop is spreading in America, where already we find parishes placed under the invocation of Saint Laurence O'Toole.

Appendix I - Sources Note

The Canons of Eu did not want for opportunities of obtaining information regarding the life of the saintly Archbishop of Dublin. Laurence, it is true, had spent but a few days with them when he died. But even in that short time they had already learned from his clergy how great was his reputation for sanctity throughout all Ireland. Soon afterwards they saw coming as pilgrims to his tomb in succession the most illustrious and the best informed in that country, each one bearing testimony to Laurence's holiness, and thus causing the radiant figure of the Saint to live again before their eyes. These spontaneous testimonies were completed afterwards by the inquiries held in Ireland, the first at the request of Abbot Guy, the second by order of the Pope.

Thus it was that in the beginning of 1191 the Archbishop of Rouen could present to Pope Celestine a sufficiently long account of Laurence's life and miracles. Later, we shall find the Abbot Hugues telling Pope Innocent that he has sent him a similar account. However, in the opinion of the Canons, these were only so many documents drawn up for the occasion in order to afford the Pope information; the final work which would make known to future generations the Saint's virtues and merits yet remained to be written.

Of those writings which have been preserved the first, according to the date, is a panegyric. In the beginning of the thirteenth century there was living at Abbeville a religious destined, one day, to become Archbishop of Besangon. Whilst still quite young he had acquired considerable reputation as a preacher. Possibly, it was whilst he was yet at Abbeville that his fame as an orator was spread abroad. For, in history, the surname of Abbeville is given to him in place of his patronymic.

Jean Halgrin, better known as Jean d'Abbeville, was invited, on the occasion of some celebrations in honour of Saint Laurence, perhaps when his remains were translated, to pronounce his panegyric, which he did in such a masterly manner that the Canons begged of him to give it to them in writing. Having made some corrections

and added a prologue, Jean d'Abbeville presented the Canons with the panegyric as a token of the fraternal affection which he had for them.

We should, no doubt, find some difficulty in subscribing to their admiration of this oratorical effort. Desirous of details, and anxious to keep in view those special surroundings in which the Saint lived, we should appreciate but little those long moral reflections unsupported by facts and rendered still more tedious by a too subtle application of Scripture texts. But such was the taste of those days. Amongst all that was written in honour of Saint Laurence the panegyric of Jean d'Abbeville ever retained first place. It was used in the composition of his Office, for which it furnished the lessons.

Those who wrote after him laboured to introduce into their compositions the principal passages from this panegyric. But, as people soon were forced to admit, the idea given by it of the Saint's life was all too imperfect, many things necessary for the realisation of its importance being omitted. In Laurence, the orator intended to propose to his audience the model for Bishops, and, in doing so, he touched but slightly on the Saint's early days, sketching rapidly that period of his life preceding his elevation to the Episcopacy, and summing up his miracles in a short recital.

Without prejudice to Jean d'Abbeville's work, from which he borrowed the prologue, one of the Abbey Chapter undertook to utilise all the information collected during close on half a century. He wrote fifty-one chapters of a Vita which embraces the whole of the Saint's career down to the ceremony of his canonisation. His pen never seems to tire. He enlarges upon everything, and finds matter everywhere for pious effusions. Laurence was canonised on the Vigil of the Feast of Saint Nicholas, and he seizes on this fact as an opportunity to devote a whole page to the institution of a comparison between the two Saints. Besides, when we reach the last years of Laurence's life, we have simply the account of a witness who is determined to omit nothing.

Such a work could not be accepted as the final Life of the Saint. We know from a footnote in an old MS. that the Canons considered it too prolix, entering into too many details already well known, and too disconnected in style. To another Canon was entrusted the task

of correction. No doubt, he improved the style and shortened the tedious passages, at the same time, one cannot but regret that in the last part of the Life he has suppressed details which could not fail to prove interesting. This second edition followed very closely upon the first. It was finished after the death of Thibaut of Amiens, in 1229, *qui tunc sedi metropolitane praerat.* It is this second edition which we find in the manuscripts in the Bibliothéque Sainte-Geneviéve in Paris, the Bibliothéque Royale in Brussels and in the Dublin libraries, and which Surius has published with his customary corrections. Only one copy of the first edition has been preserved.

The second editor has also used more method in the classification of the various documents which form, as it were, a sequel to the *Vita*, giving the account of the canonisation separately: "Incipit secundus de canonisatione ipsius." The number of miracles is reduced to 150, and these are divided into three series: those adduced at Rome in support of the process of canonisation, and attested on oath; those which happened before the canonisation; and those wrought at the celebrations for the canonisation and in the following years.

Appendix II - Letter of Pope Celestine III

10 May 1181

Celestinus episcopus, servus servorum Dei, dilectis filiis sancti Victoris Parisienis et sancte Marie.de Augo Abbatibus, salutem et apostolicam benedictionem.

Cum de vita et miraculis olim Laurentii Dublinensis archiepiscopi nobis multa fuerint proposita et litteras prelatorum Ecclesiae atque secularium personarum, et presertim assertione venerabilis fratris nostri Rothomagensis archiepiscopi nuntiata, Rogati fuimus ut faceremus sanctorum catalogo applicari, qui rerum quadam incommoditate ac temporum faciente, petitionem illam ad presens non possumus exaudire. Verum sancta Romana Ecclesia meliori tempore accedente, id annuente Deo in posterum efficere poterit et utiliter confrmare. Datum Rome apud sanctum Petrum, XIII Kl. iunii, pontificatus nostri anno primo.

Bishop Celestine, servant of the servants of God, to the beloved sons of Saint Victor of Paris and Saint Marie de Auge, Abbots, greetings and apostolic blessing.

Since much has been proposed to us about the life and miracles of the late Archbishop Lawrence of Dublin, and letters from prelates of the Church and secular persons, and especially the assertion of our venerable brother the Archbishop of Rouen, we have been asked to have them added to the list of saints, which, due to a certain inconvenience of things and times, we cannot at present grant that request. But the holy Roman Church, when a better time approaches, God willing, will be able to effect it in the future and usefully confirm it. Given at Rome at Saint Peter's, the 13th of June, in the first year of our pontificate.

Appendix III - First Abbots of Eu given in the *Gallia Christ*

1. Robert, 1119
2. Gosselin, 1139
3. Anselm, 1148
4. Roger, 1148-1162
5. Osbert, 1162-1180
6. Mathieu, about 1183
7. Hugues, 1190-1207
8. Gilles, 1210-1213
9. Guy, 1214-1248

Appendix IV - Official Statement of Monsignor de Bonnechose, Cardinal Archbishop of Rouen, 21 July 1876

Friday, the twenty-first day of the said month (July, 1876), in presence of M. the Abbé Isaac, our Vicar-General, the Abbé Dechanteloup, curé doyen, Abbé Loth, Professor in the Faculty of Theology, Abbé Périer, our Private Secretary, Abbé Totain, and Abbé Legay, Vicars, and assisted by Messieurs Leconte and Michelet, Doctors in Medicine, we proceeded to open the shrine and to verify the remains of Saint Laurence. We have taken therefrom two bones of the spine, and we shall take care to have one exposed for the veneration of the faithful in the new chapel dedicated to the Saint, and the other placed in our Archiepiscopal Treasury. We have similarly verified the Saint's venerable head which is enclosed in a bust of bronze plated with silver, and with emotion we have perceived in it a falling in and displacement of the cranial bones, which, in the opinion of the surgeons, must be the marks left by the blow from a club received by the Saint at the tomb of Saint Thomas of Canterbury. Having drawn up an official statement of these facts which we placed in the two shrines, we carefully closed each of them, and sealed them with the seal bearing our arms.

In testimony whereof we have written and signed the present official statement at Rouen, on the nineteenth day of the month of August, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-six.

+ Henry Cardinal de Bonnechose
Archbishop of Rouen.

Appendix V - Letter to the Author from Monsignor Fuzet, Archbishop of Rouen

Archbishop's House,
Rouen, France
26th April 1914

Dear Monsieur Aumonier,

I have received with pleasure the works which you sent me. First, the second edition of your monograph on the Church at Eu to which is added an account of the College Chapel. This second edition proves the success of your book, a success which it well deserves and on which I congratulate you. Next in order come three small volumes which, you tell me, form "des études préparatoires pour une vie des Saints du Diocese de Rouen." These first volumes of your projected work make us wish for its completion as soon as possible. We want a diocesan hagiography, solid, based on close research, and written with that methodical precision requisite in the present day, and which, whilst soundly critical, will combine the evidence of written documents with that of time-honoured traditions. Let yours be the task to give us this hagiography. Let it be learned, yet, at the same time, in a popular style. And do not neglect to infuse into it that pious earnestness by means of which our old ecclesiastical historians were able to move the heart, and so accomplish much good, and yet, at the same time, satisfy the intellect.

Finally came the finished sheets of your book, now ready to appear: *Saint Laurence O'Toole*. That your hero may be the better understood, it has been your aim from the beginning, "to place him," as people say, in his own period, and amidst his own distant surroundings, a period, on the whole, involved in obscurity, and, consequently, the study of which is difficult and complicated. Notwithstanding, aided by patience and discernment, you have succeeded in making live for us the figures, the rivalries, the battles, the people. From this background stands forth your central figure. If you have not painted him in stronger colours it is because,

separated as he is from us by a distance of more than seven centuries, and with the scant information which we possess, it would be impossible to give that wealth of accurate colour and detail such as we could have wished for in the portraits of some of his contemporaries.

The death, by happy dispensation of Providence, of Saint Laurence at Eu, the veneration in which his remains have ever been held, the magnificent church in which they are venerated, the processions organised annually in his honour: all this, which belongs rather to the Saint's posthumous history, possesses an ever present interest. For in these things Saint Laurence becomes for us more real and lifelike. You have given the account of them in full, and that portion of your work will charm everyone.

Shall I congratulate you on not having passed over in silence, or at least discussed them in a few words, the miracles wrought at your hero's tomb. True, they have always occupied an important place in the writings relating to his life; therefore you could not look upon them as details that might be omitted. But so many others might perhaps have done so, and these not freethinkers, but even Catholics and possibly ecclesiastics, who would consider that in this omission they displayed greater erudition. You have spoken of them fittingly, as became the narrator, not the preacher, and with a respect which makes itself felt without any effort. Miracles wrought at the intercession of the Saints are rarer in these days than in the past, and this happens, no doubt, not because the power of God's friends has grown less, but because the confidence of the Faithful has been gradually weakened by the prevailing spirit of criticism. Let hagiographers beware that they do not contribute to its still further diminution.

Finally, I want to pay you one last compliment. You have written in a dispassionate, simple, exact style, perfectly appropriate to the subject. Books in this style are, apparently unpretentious; they are far more likely than many others to endure.

Receive, dear Monsieur, the assurance of my most devoted sentiments.

+ Frederick,

Archbishop of Rouen

About This EBook

The text of this ebook, and the black and white images of the interior and exterior of Church of Notre Dame in Eu, are taken from the book *The Life of St. Laurence O'Toole, Archbishop of Dublin (1128-1180)*, by Monsignor L'Abbé Legris (Father Albert Legris), Honorary Canon and Chaplain to the Hospice at Eu. The edition used states that it is an English translation, but does not identify the translator; the original was, presumably, in French. It was published in Dublin, Ireland by the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland.

Footnotes that simply list sources for a passage, or the original French of Latin, have been edited out as they would be of little value to current readers, and the works might not be available. The Bibliography has been omitted. The appendices have been presented in a different order and slightly different format. If the original format is needed, a scan of the printed book is available at the Internet Archive.

It has the Nihil Obstat of Francis E O'Loughlin, Censor Theol. Deputat.; and the Imprimi Potest of William Joseph Walsh, Archbishop of Dublin, Ireland, 8 October 1914.

The cover image is a detail of a stained glass window in the ambulatory of of Saint Laurence in the Saint Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Marlborough Street, Dublin, Ireland. It was built in 1886 by Franz Borgias Mayer and Company, photographed on 28 September 2012 by Andreas F Borchet, and the image swiped from Wikimedia Commons.

The effigy image is of the tomb in the crypt of the Collégiale Notre-Dame et Saint-Laurent d'Eu, France. It was photographed by Pierre André Leclercq on 10 September 2021, and the image swiped from Wikimedia Commons.

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